

EVERYMAN CHESS

easy guide
to the
Ruy Lopez



John Emms

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Ruy Lopez

by John Emms

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Everyman Chess, formerly Cadogan Chess, is published by Everyman Publishers, London

First published in 1999 by Everyman Publishers plc, formerly Cadogan Books plc, Gloucester Mansions, 140A Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8HD in association with Gambit Publications Ltd, 69 Masbro Road, London W14 0LS.

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 1 85744 220 2

Distributed in North America by The Globe Pequot Press, 6 Business Park Road, P.O. Box 833, Old Saybrook, Connecticut 06475-0833.
Telephone 1-800 243 0495 (toll free)

All other sales enquiries should be directed to Everyman Chess, Gloucester Mansions, 140A Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8HD
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To Christine

EVERYMAN CHESS SERIES (formerly Cadogan Chess)

Chief Advisor: Garry Kasparov

Series Editor: Murray Chandler

Edited by Graham Burgess and typeset by Petra Nunn for
Gambit Publications Ltd.

Printed in Great Britain by Redwood Books, Trowbridge, Wilts.

Contents

Symbols	4
Bibliography	5
Introduction	6
1 Rare Third Moves for Black	9
2 The Schliemann Variation	18
3 The Classical Variation	29
4 The Berlin Defence	35
5 The Deferred Steinitz and Other Fourth Move Alternatives	47
6 Møller and Arkhangelsk Variations	55
7 The Open Lopez	69
8 The 8 a4 Anti-Marshall	81
9 Ideas in the Closed Lopez	89
10 Rare Closed Lopez Variations	96
11 The Karpov Variation	99
12 The Zaitsev Variation	107
13 The Smyslov Variation	119
14 The Breyer Variation	122
15 The Chigorin Defence	127
Index of Variations	142

Symbols

+	check
++	double check
#	checkmate
x	capture
!!	brilliant move
!	good move
!?	interesting move
?!	dubious move
?	bad move
??	blunder
Ch	championship
Cht	team championship
Wch	world championship
Ct	candidates event
IZ	interzonal event
Z	zonal event
OL	olympiad
ECC	European Clubs Cup
jr	junior event
wom	women's event
mem	memorial event
rdp	rapidplay game
corr	correspondence game
qual	qualifying event
1-0	the game ends in a win for White
½-½	the game ends in a draw
0-1	the game ends in a win for Black
(<i>n</i>)	<i>n</i> th match game
(<i>D</i>)	see next diagram

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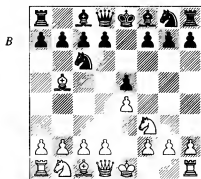
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Introduction

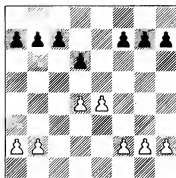
1 e4 e5 2 $\text{\textcircled{d}}$ f3 $\text{\textcircled{c}}$ c6 3 $\text{\textcircled{b}}$ b5 (D)



The Ruy Lopez (or Spanish Game, as it's often called) is a simple opening, with a simple idea. White's second and third moves have both increased the pressure on the centre, and in particular the e5-square. Give or take a few developing moves, the next stage of White's plan is to take control of the centre and increase the pressure on e5 with the advance d4, which is often supported by c3. It may be a simple enough plan, but it can be highly effective. Because of this, the Ruy Lopez has stood the test of time. Other openings come and go, drifting in and out of fashion, but the Lopez has always been a popular choice for all levels of player, from novice to World Champion, and it will continue to be.

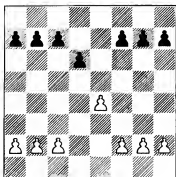
Mobile and Little Centres

If Black buckles under the pressure and relinquishes the centre with ...exd4, then depending on whether White has played c3 or not, White either obtains a Mobile Centre or a Little Centre, either of which is generally favourable to the one in possession.



This is the Mobile Centre. The pair of central pawns on e4 and d4 control many important squares and give White a space advantage plus more freedom of movement for his pieces. In addition, White has the option of creating a central breakthrough with a timely e5. This thrust could provide a platform for a successful attack on the black king.

The diagram overleaf shows the Little Centre. This pawn structure is



less dangerous for Black than the previous one, but it still favours White. The pawn on e4 is more advanced than Black's central d6-pawn, which once again means that White has more space to move his pieces. Added to this is that White also has control over the important d5- and f5-squares.

How Does Black React?

Of course Black has many different possible defences against the Lopez, but in general there are two different types of strategy. The first is to meet White's d4 advance by bolstering the e5-pawn with pawns and pieces. This plan is seen in all the closed defences (Chapters 9-15), the Classical Variation (Chapter 3), the Deferred Steinitz (Chapter 5) and the trendy Møller and Arkhangelsk Variations (Chapter 6).

Black's second strategy revolves around a swift counterattack against White's e4-pawn. This is seen in lines such as the sharp Schliemann Variation (Chapter 2), the Berlin Defence (Chapter 4) and the Open Lopez (Chapter 7).

A Real Opening

As a junior player I was quite content to play openings such as the Vienna Game, the King's Gambit and the Scotch Gambit, obtaining quick victories against the unsuspecting opponents who did not know their theory.

However, as time progressed and my opponents became more experienced, my repertoire of tricky openings just didn't seem work any more. No one was falling for my traps, and often all I was left with was a sterile equality, or something even worse.

In 1989 I appeared in the British Championship for the fourth time. Keen to make more of an impression than on my previous undistinguished attempts, I vowed that as White I would give up my 'baby openings', take a deep breath and try the Ruy Lopez. After all, it was time I grew up! My chance came in round 9, when I was paired with Scotland's top player Paul Motwani, who was a seasoned 1...e5 player. The experience was quite enlightening.

Emms – Motwani

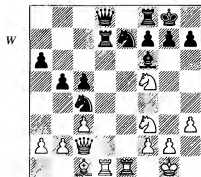
British Ch (Plymouth) 1989

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♙b5 a6 4 ♙a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♙e7 6 ♚e1 b5 7 ♙b3 0-0 8 c3 d6 9 h3 ♙e6 10 d4 ♙xb3 11 ♚xb3

In Chapter 10 I advocate 11 axb3, but in 1989 I was only just learning the theory. Still 11 ♚xb3 is not bad either. I was already struck by the fact that I had a perfectly good position, and even more importantly, one that was easy to play. This was just the sort of

thing I needed when confronting somebody rated 200 points higher than myself.

11...d5 12 exd5 ♖a5 13 ♖c2 exd4
14 ♜xd4 ♜xd5 15 ♜d2 ♜f6 16 ♜2f3
c5 17 ♜f5 ♜a7 18 ♜d2 ♜c4 19 ♜ad1
♜d7 20 ♜c1 ♜e7 (D)



21 ♜g5!

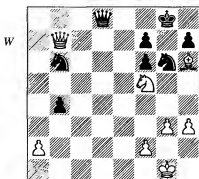
As far as I could see, I hadn't played any special moves, only natural ones, yet my position was getting better and better. This was certainly a good choice of opening.

21...♜g6 22 ♜e4 ♜e8 23 ♜xf6+
gxf6 24 ♜h6 ♜xb2

Actually, I had missed this tactic, but such is the dire position of the black king, White is winning in any case. So Lopez players are even lucky!

25 ♜xe8+ ♜xe8 26 ♜xd7 ♜xd7 27
♜e4! ♜d1+ 28 ♜h2 ♜d8 29 ♜c6 ♜d3

30 ♜xa6 b4 31 cxb4 cxb4 32 ♜g1
♜df4 33 ♜b7 ♜d5 34 g3 ♜b6 (D)



35 ♜e3 ♜d5 36 ♜h6+ ♜g7 37
♜xf7+ ♜h8 38 ♜d4 ♜e5 39 ♜xe5
fxe5 40 ♜e6 ♜g7 41 ♜f5+ ♜f8 42
♜d6 1-0

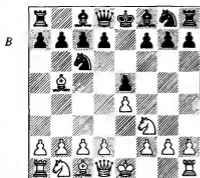
It goes without saying that after this little episode, I was converted, and I haven't strayed off the path since.

How This Book is Written

Throughout the book I have attempted to give a concise theoretical overview of the main lines of the Ruy Lopez, with a repertoire slant for the white pieces. In spite of this, I have tried to remain as objective as possible in my coverage, although as I mentioned in my earlier *Easy Guide to the Nimzo-Indian*, this can be quite difficult for a hardened advocate of one side!

1 Rare Third Moves for Black

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♙c6 3 ♜b5 (D)



Black has a significant number of unusual third move alternatives when faced with the Lopez. After 1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♙c6 3 ♜b5 we shall look at (in roughly ascending order of importance) the following moves:

- A: 3...♜b4 9
- B: 3...d6 10
- C: 3...♞d4 12
- D: 3...g6 14
- E: 3...♞ge7 16

First of all, we should look at some black moves that are considered even rarer than rare, and are a mixture of the bad and the ugly!

a) 3...♞e7 4 0-0 ♞d8! is an intriguing scheme of development, which

is not easily refuted. Black plans ...c6 and ...d6, while the knight may re-enter the game via e6. That said, White has many ways to achieve an edge. After 5 d4 c6 I like 6 ♜d3 d6 7 b3!?, with ideas of ♜b2 or ♜a3.

b) 3...♞f6 tries to make it difficult for White to achieve the d4 advance. However, the queen can become exposed on f6. One way to keep a plus is with 4 ♞c3 ♞ge7 5 d3 a6 6 ♜c4.

c) 3...f6 was, unbelievably, played by Steinitz. Almost anything will do against this. 4 0-0 ♞ge7 5 d4 ♞g6 6 ♞c3 is one way to secure an ample advantage.

d) 3...a5! is a bizarre move, which does have the point that 4 d3?! ♞a7! 5 ♜c4 b5 wins a piece, although 6 ♜xf7+ ♞xf7 7 ♞xe5+ is still very unclear. White should probably just play 4 0-0, when 4...♞a7 5 ♜e2 d6 6 d4 leaves the knight looking rather silly on a7.

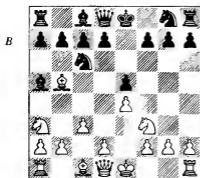
A) 3...♜b4

This is another odd-looking move that was once a favourite of the Swedish grandmaster Jonny Hector. The best one could say about 3...♜b4 is that it's not quite as bad as it looks!

4 c3

Why not gain time on the bishop with this natural Lopez move?

4...♖a5 5 ♖a3! (D)



A good move. This knight will arrive at c4, gaining more time by attacking the bishop.

5...♗b6 6 ♖c4 d6

Or 6...♖f6 7 d3 d6 8 a4 a6 (8...0-0? 9 ♗xc6 bxc6 10 a5 ♗c5 11 b4 wins a piece) 9 ♖xb6 cxb6 10 ♗c4, when the bishop-pair gave White an advantage in Barlov-Velimirović, Yugoslav Ch 1994.

7 0-0 ♖ge7

This knight belongs on e7 in this system. 7...♖f6 8 d4 exd4 9 cxd4 0-0 10 ♗g5 h6 11 ♗h4 ♗g4 12 ♗xc6 bxc6 13 e5 dxe5 14 ♖cx5 gave White a clear plus in Schüssler-Lukez, Helsingborg 1990.

8 a4 0-0

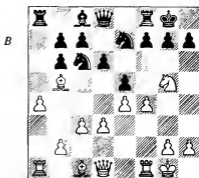
At this point there's a pitfall, of which White must be very wary. On first inspection the move 9 a5? seems to trap the black bishop, but Black has the neat trick 9...♖xa5! 10 ♖xa5 ♗xa5 11 ♗xa5 c6! and it's Black who

wins material. No better is 9 ♗xc6?! ♖xc6 10 a5, because Black can play 10...♗e6!.

9 d3 ♗e6

9...d5 opens the position prematurely. In Hellers-Hector, Haninge 1990 White got a big advantage after 10 exd5 ♗xd5 11 ♗e1 ♗g4 12 h3 ♗xf3 13 ♗xf3 ♗xf3 14 gxf3 f6 15 a5 ♗c5 16 b4! ♖xb4 17 ♗xc6 ♗xc3 18 ♗xb7 ♗ab8 19 a6 ♗fd8 20 ♗e3.

10 ♖xb6 axb6 11 ♖g5 ♗c8 12 f4! (D)



Hellers-Hector, Stockholm Rilton Cup 1990/1. White's two bishops and extra space give him a clear edge.

B)

3...d6

Steinitz's Defence. This has a reputation of being quite solid, but rather passive, and it's not very popular these days. If Black wants to play lines involving an early ...d6, it's more normal to use the deferred move-order of 3...a6 4 ♗a4 and only then 4...d6 (see Chapter 5).

4 d4

White has other moves, but this is the most direct way to achieve a good position.

4...♗d7

Not the only move. Others include:

a) 4...exd4 5 ♖xd4 ♗d7 (5...♗e7 6 ♗g5 a6 7 ♗xc6+ ♗xc6 8 ♗d2 ♗e7 9 ♗c3 ♗xg5 10 ♗xg5 0-0 11 0-0-0 gave White the usual spatial plus in Ulybin-Adams, Khalkidhiki 1992) 6 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 7 ♗c3 (7 ♗g5 ♗e7 8 ♖xg7 ♗f6 9 ♖xh8 ♗xh8 10 ♗xd8 ♗xb2 is not so clear) 7...♗f6 8 ♗g5 ♗e7 9 0-0-0 0-0 10 ♗he1 ♗e8 11 ♗b1 with a slight advantage for White, Anderssen-Paulsen, Vienna 1873.

b) 4...♗g4 (Marshall's idea) 5 dxe5 dxe5 6 ♖xd8+ (6 ♗d5 ♖xd5 7 exd5 ♗xf3 8 gxf3 a6 9 dxc6 axb5 10 cxb7 ♗b8 11 a4! b4 12 a5 ♗xb7 13 a6 ♗b8 14 ♗c3 was also better for White in Canfell-Wohl, Australian Ch 1991) 6...♗xd8 7 ♗xc6+ bxc6 and now not 8 ♗xe5?? allowing 8...♗d1#, but 8 ♗bd2, which maintains an advantage for White. One possible continuation would be 8...♗d6 9 ♗c4! ♗f6 (9...f6 10 ♗e3 and 9...♗xf3 10 gxf3 ♗e7 11 ♗e3 a6 12 0-0-0 are also slightly better for White) 10 ♗e3 ♗xe4 11 ♗cxe5 ♗xf3 12 ♗xf3, reaching a position which shows us why this line is not played by Black: everything else is equal, but Black's pawn weaknesses on the queenside are permanent.

5 0-0

This is the main line, but White can also consider ambitious ideas involving queenside castling after 5 ♗c3. Both 5...♗f6 6 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 7 ♗d3

exd4 8 ♗xd4 ♗d7 9 ♗g5 ♗e7 10 0-0-0 and 5...exd4 6 ♗xd4 g6 7 ♗e3 ♗g7 8 ♗d2 ♗f6 9 ♗xc6 bxc6 10 ♗h6 0-0 11 ♗xg7 ♗xg7 12 0-0-0 ♗e8 13 f3 are better for White.

5...♗f6

Once again the main move, although 5...exd4 6 ♗xd4 g6!? is a more ambitious way of developing. After 7 ♗c3 ♗g7 8 ♗xc6 bxc6 the sequence 9 ♗e1 ♗e7 10 ♗f4 is the most annoying for Black. If then 10...0-0 White presses forward with 11 e5!, for example 11...d5 12 ♗a4 with a strong bind on the dark squares. Black can prevent the advance with 10...f6, but the simple plan of exchanging dark-squared bishops with 11 ♗d2 0-0 12 ♗h6 ♖b8 13 ♗xg7 ♗xg7 14 b3 was enough to give White an edge in J.Todorović-Yanovsky, Belgrade 1988.

6 ♗c3 exd4

After 6...♗e7 White can virtually force Black to give up the centre in any case by 7 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 8 ♗d3!. Now 8...♗d7 9 ♗e3 exd4 10 ♗xd4 0-0 11 f4 looks good for White, so Black normally plays 8...exd4. Following 9 ♗xd4 ♗d7 White can develop aggressively with 10 b3 0-0 11 ♗b2 ♗e8 12 f4 ♗f8 13 ♗ae1. Hamdouchi-Campora, Dos Hermanas 1998 continued 13...c5 14 ♗f3 ♗c6 15 ♗d5 ♗xd5 16 exd5 h6 17 c4, when Black was struggling to find breathing room.

7 ♗xd4 ♗e7 8 ♗e1 0-0

8...♗xd4 9 ♖xd4 ♗xb5 10 ♗xb5 0-0 11 ♗f4 ♗d7 12 ♗ad1 a6 13 ♗c3 ♗f6 14 ♖b4 left Black without any prospects in Hraček-Smejkal, Czech Cht 1997/8.

9 ♟xc6 bxc6

If Black captures with 9...♟xc6, then White should just proceed with 10 b3 and 11 ♟b2.

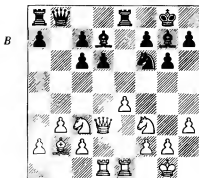
10 ♟d3!

More accurate than the immediate 10 b3, which allows Black to break out with 10...d5! 11 e5 ♟b4!.

10...♞e8 11 b3 ♟f8 12 ♟b2 g6

In the game Nunn-Portisch, Budapest Ct playoff (6) 1987, Black diverged with 12...c5, but after 13 ♖f3 ♟c6 14 ♞ad1 h6 15 e5! White was still better.

13 ♞ad1 ♟g7 14 h3 ♟b8 15 ♖f3 (D)

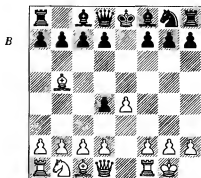


White prepares the e5 advance. In Nunn-Portisch, Budapest Ct playoff (2) 1987, White kept the advantage after 15...♟c6 16 e5 ♖d5 17 ♖c4 ♟f5 18 c4.

C)**3...♖d4**

This defence was invented in the nineteenth century by the English master Henry Bird. The idea is to

leave the Lopez bishop hitting thin air on b5. Bird's Defence has never really caught on, however, probably because Black moves his knight twice in the opening, just to see it exchanged.

4 ♖xd4 exd4 5 0-0 (D)

At this point Black has two serious options:

C1: 5...c6 12

C2: 5...♟c5 13

After 5...♖e7 White should continue with 6 d3 c6 7 ♟a4 d5 8 ♖d2, e.g. 8...dxe4 9 ♖xe4 ♖f5 10 ♟b3 ♟e7 11 ♟h5, with some advantage, Petrosian-Süer, Varna OL 1962.

C1)**5...c6**

Immediately putting the question to the white bishop. This line is less popular than 5...♟c5.

6 ♟c4 d5

Another way for Black to play is 6...♖f6 7 ♞e1 d6 8 c3 ♖g4 9 h3 ♖c5 10 d3 ♖xc4 11 dxc4 dxc3 12 ♖xc3 ♟c7 13 ♟f4 0-0 14 ♟d3, when Black's

weak pawn on d6 gave White an edge in Matanović-Gliksman, Yugoslav Ch 1967.

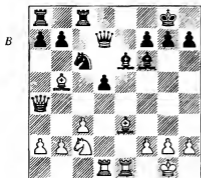
7 exd5 cxd5 8 ♖e1+ ♜e7

The more natural 8...♙e7 allows 9 ♙b5+, when 9...♙d7 runs into 10 ♖g4! so Black is forced to play the ugly 9...♙f8.

9 ♙f1 ♙e6 10 c3 ♖d7 11 ♜a3 ♜c6
12 ♗a4 ♙e7 13 ♜c2 ♙f6

Forced, as 13...0-0 14 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 15 ♗xd7 ♙xd7 16 ♚xc7 ♜c2 17 ♚b1 ♙f5 18 d3 is clearly better for White.

14 ♙b5 dxc3 15 dxc3 0-0 16 ♙e3
♚fc8 17 ♚ad1 (D)



This position arose in Geller-Klaman, Moscow 1949. The pressure against Black's isolated d-pawn gives White a very pleasant game.

C2)

5...♙c5

This is the main line of Bird's Defence. Black develops a piece and waits for White to commit himself before attacking the bishop.

6 d3 c6 7 ♙a4

In this line the bishop is better placed on a4, out of the way of any ...d5 breaks from Black.

7...♜e7

More recently, Black has been experimenting with 7...d6, giving the knight the option of going to f6. This idea works after 8 f4 f5!? 9 ♜d2 ♜f6! 10 e5 dxe5 11 fxe5 ♜g4, when Black has succeeded in reaching a playable position. However, White should play more craftily with 8 ♙b3!, planning to meet 8...♜f6 with the pinning 9 ♙g5!. If Black reverts to 8...♜e7, then White also reverts to the original plan with 9 f4!, leading to lines similar to the main text.

8 f4!

This powerful move has done a great deal of damage to the reputation of Bird's Defence.

8...f5

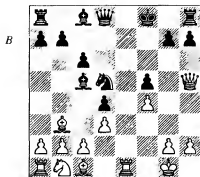
This move is virtually forced. Failure to prevent White's f5 thrust can result in a grim position, e.g. 8...d5 9 f5 f6 (9...0-0 10 f6! is even worse) 10 ♗h5+ ♙f8 11 ♙h1 ♙d7 12 c3 ♙e8 13 ♗h4 dxe4 14 dxe4 ♗b6 15 ♙b3 ♙f7 16 ♜d2 dxc3 17 bxc3 and Black is in big trouble, Kindermann-Tatai, Budapest 1987.

9 ♙b3 d5 10 exd5 ♜xd5 11 ♖e1+ ♙f8

11...♙f7 is no better. White continues 12 ♜d2 ♖e8 (NCO gives 12...g6 13 ♜f3 ♙g7 14 ♙xd5 ♗xd5 15 ♖e5 ♗d6 16 b4! ♙xb4 17 ♙b2 with a clear advantage, as 17...c5 18 a3 ♙a5 fails to 19 ♚xc5!) 13 ♗h5+ ♙f8 14 ♚xc8+ ♗xe8 15 ♗xe8+ ♙xe8 16 ♙xd5 cxd5 17 ♜f3 ♙d7 18 b3 ♖c8 19 ♙b2 ♙b6

20 ♖c1 and the d4-pawn is ripe for picking.

12 ♖h5! (D)



Black's airy king position is a major cause for concern. Kamsky-Ivanchuk, Tilburg 1990 continued 12...g6 13 ♖h6+ ♕g8 14 ♘d2 ♘f8 15 ♖h3 ♘g7 16 ♘f3 h6 17 ♘c5 ♖f6 18 ♘xd5+ cxd5 19 b3! ♕h7 20 ♘b2 ♖b6 21 ♖f3 ♗e8 22 ♖f2 ♘xe5 23 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 24 ♘xd4 ♗e2 25 ♘xb6 ♗xf2 26 ♘xf2 and White had achieved a winning endgame.

D)

3...g6

This quiet positional move has been favoured by former World Champions Spassky and Smyslov. White can now play 4 c3, when Black's best reaction would be to transpose to Chapter 5 with 4...a6 5 ♘a4 d6 6 d4 ♘d7. Attempts to do without ...a6 give White more options, for example 4...d6 5 d4 ♘d7 6 ♖b3! ♘a5 7 ♖a4 c6 8 ♘c2 b5 9 ♖c2 ♘g7 10 0-0 ♘c7 11 dxe5 dxe5 12 a4, leading to an edge for White,

Dolmatov-Kholmov, Sochi 1988. However, as well as 4 c3 White can play in a more direct fashion with...

4 d4!? exd4

4...♘xd4 5 ♘xd4 exd4 6 ♖xd4 ♖f6 7 e5 is very favourable for White, e.g. 7...♖b6 8 ♖xb6 axb6 9 ♘c3 ♘b4 10 ♘d2 ♗a5 11 a4 c6 12 ♘c4! ♘xd2+ 13 ♖xd2 ♘h6 14 b4 ♗a8 15 ♘d6+ ♕e7 16 ♘d3 with an overwhelming position, Kasparov-Garcia Santos, Galicia simul 1991.

5 ♘g5 ♘e7

Of course, Black cannot continue 5...♘ge7, due to 6 ♘f6. The alternative to 5...♘e7 is 5...f6, when White keeps the advantage after 6 ♘h4 ♘g7 7 0-0 ♘ge7 8 ♘c4 ♘a5 9 ♖xd4 ♘ec6 10 ♖d5 ♘xc4 11 ♖xc4 d6 12 ♘c3 ♘g4 13 ♘d4 ♘xd4 (not 13...♘e5? 14 ♖b5+) 14 ♖xd4. Now Nunn-Davies, Hastings 1987/8 continued 14...0-0?! 15 f4 ♖d7 16 h3 ♘e6 17 f5! gxf5 18 exf5 ♘xf5 19 ♘d5 and White's attack was much too strong. 14...g5 is a more resolute defence, when 15 ♘xg5? fails to 15...c5 16 ♖a4+ ♘d7 17 ♘b5 ♖b6. However, White can keep a small plus with 15 ♘g3 h5 16 h3 ♘e6 17 f4.

6 ♘xe7 (D)

Now Black has two options:

D1: 6...♖xe7 14

D2: 6...♘gxe7 15

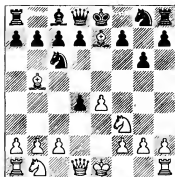
D1)

6...♖xe7 7 ♘xc6 dxc6

The greedy 7...♖b4+ is punished by 8 c3 ♖xb2 9 ♖xd4 ♖xa1 10 0-0 f6 11 e5! dxc6 12 exf6, when White's attack comes crashing through.

8 ♖xd4 ♘f6 9 ♘c3 ♘g4

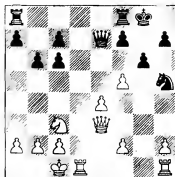
B



In Sax-Smyslov, New York 1987, White built up a menacing kingside attack after 9...0-0 10 0-0-0 ♙e6 11 h3 ♞fd8 12 ♞e3 b5 13 ♜e5 ♙d7 14 f4 ♙e8 15 g4 a5 16 g5 ♜h5 17 ♜g4 b4 18 ♜a4 . In particular, Black suffers because his queenside pawns are less mobile, a perennial problem of the doubled pawn complex.

10 0-0-0 ♙xf3 11 gxf3 0-0 12 ♞e3 ♜h5 13 f4 b6 14 f5 (D)

B



Luther-Dautov, Bad Lauterberg 1991. White's initiative on the kingside gives him the advantage.

D2)

6... ♜gxe7 7 ♜xd4 d5

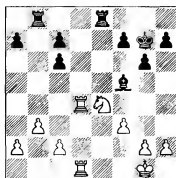
Delaying this for a move with 7...0-0 8 ♜c3 d5 doesn't change the assessment of the position. White can keep an advantage after both 9 ♙xc6 bxc6 10 ♜b3! dxe4 11 ♜xe4 and the simple 9 ♜xc6 bxc6 10 ♙d3 ♞b8 11 b3 .

8 ♜c3 dxe4 9 ♙xc6+ ♜xc6 10 ♜xc6 ♞xd1+ 11 ♞d1 bxc6 12 ♜xe4 ♙f5 13 0-0! 0-0

After 13... ♙xe4 14 ♞fe1 f5 15 f3 ♞d8 16 fxe4 f4 17 ♞xd8+ ♜xd8 18 ♜f2 ♜e7 19 ♞d1 g5 20 ♜f3 h5 21 ♞d4 ♞b8 22 b3 Black's queenside weaknesses proved fatal in Wahls-Zsu.Polgar, Dortmund 1990.

14 ♞d4 ♜g7 15 f3 ♞fe8 16 ♞fd1 ♞ab8 17 b3 (D)

B



Black's weak a- and c-pawns make this endgame rather uncomfortable for him. Nunn-Salov, Skellefteå World Cup 1989 continued 17... ♞b5 18 ♞c4 ♞d5 19 ♞d3 ♞e6 20 ♜f2 h6 21 ♞a4 ♙xe4 22 ♞xe4 ♜f6 and now 23 ♜e3 would have kept a clear advantage.

E)

3...♖ge7

This move was briefly popular in the late 1980s, when it was used by grandmasters such as Ivan Sokolov and Alexei Dreev. Black's idea is to follow up with ...g6, ...♗g7 and a later ...d5. Here we look at two alternatives for White:

E1: 4 ♖c3!? 16

E2: 4 c3 16

E1)

4 ♖c3!?

A tricky move, against which Black must defend very carefully.

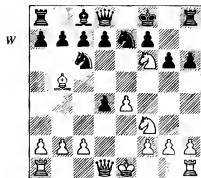
4...g6

If 4...♖g6 White should open the position with 5 d4 exd4 6 ♖xd4. Following 6...♗c5 7 ♗c3 ♗xd4 8 ♗xd4 0-0 9 ♗c3 d6 10 0-0 ♖h8 11 ♖d2 f5 12 f4 fxe4 13 ♖xe4 ♖e7 14 ♖g3 White was better in Barczay-Sydor, Lublin 1969.

5 d4 exd4 6 ♖d5! ♗g7 7 ♗g5 h6

Forced, as 8 ♗xc6 was threatened.

8 ♗f6 ♗xf6 9 ♖xf6+ ♖f8 (D)



10 ♖xd4

Perhaps White should consider the untried 10 ♖d2!? here. The point is to meet 10...♗g7 with 11 ♖xd4!, transposing to the next note. 10...♖f5 11 ♖d5 ♖g7 12 ♖f4 ♖e6 13 ♖xe6+ dxe6 14 0-0-0 favours White, as does 10...d5 11 ♗xc6 ♖xc6 12 ♖xd5. This leaves us with 10...d6, but here 11 ♖xd4 ♖f5 12 ♖xc6 ♖xf6 13 exf5 bxc6 14 ♗xc6 may give White an edge. This line needs a practical test.

10...♖f5!

Murey-Dreev, Moscow 1989 continued 10...♗g7, which White met by the shocking 11 ♖d2!. Dreev continued weakly with 11...♖g8 12 ♖d5 ♖f6 13 ♖c3 ♖h5 14 g4, when White had an overwhelming position. However, grabbing the knight with 11...♖xf6 also gives White an irresistible attack after 12 ♖c3, e.g. 12...♖e5 13 f4 d6 14 fxe5+ dxe5 15 0-0-0!, or 12...♖xd4 13 ♖xd4+ ♖e6 14 ♗c4+ d5 15 exd5+ ♖d7 16 0-0-0 a6 17 d6!.

11 ♖h7+!?

Black is fine after 11 exf5 ♖xf6 12 ♗xc6 dxc6 13 fxg6 ♗g7!, preparing ...♗d8.

11...♗xh7 12 exf5 ♖f6 13 ♗xc6 dxc6 14 0-0 c5

Emms-Twyble, London 1998. Now White should play 15 ♖b5!? ♗xf5 16 ♖xc7 ♗d8 17 ♖f3 ♖xb2 18 ♗ab1 ♖xc2 19 ♗xb7 with good compensation for the pawn.

E2)

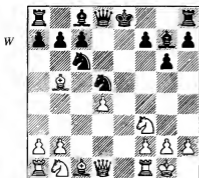
4 c3 g6

4...a6 5 ♗a4 d6 6 d4 ♗d7 transposes to Chapter 5.

5 0-0 ♖g7 6 d4 exd4

Black gives up the centre, but plans to strike back immediately. 6...0-0 7 d5 a6 8 ♖e2 ♖a7 9 c4 is obviously better for White.

7 exd4 d5 8 exd5 ♖xd5 (D)



9 ♖g5

In my opinion this is more accurate than 9 ♖e1+ ♖e6 10 ♖xc6+ bxc6 11 ♖g5, which may transpose, but unnecessarily gives Black the added option of 11...♖b8!?

9...♖d6 10 ♖e1+ ♖e6 11 ♖bd2 0-0 12 ♖e4 ♖b4 13 ♖xc6 bxc6 14 ♖c1! ♖fe8 15 ♖d2 ♖b6

15...♖b5 16 ♖e5 ♖f5 17 ♖c5 (NCO) also gives White an edge.

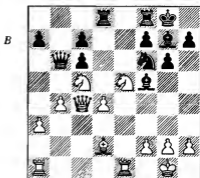
16 ♖e5 ♖f5 17 ♖e5 ♖ad8

Giving up the dark squares with 17...♖xe5? is not to be recommended. After 18 dxe5 ♖b4 19 ♖g5 ♖c2 20 ♖d7! ♖xd7 21 ♖xc2 Black has chronic weaknesses around his king.

18 a3 ♖f6 19 ♖c4 ♖f8

19...♖e6? fails to 20 ♖xe6 ♖xc6 21 ♖xf7!

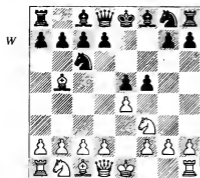
20 b4 (D)



Donchev-Radulov, Bulgaria 1991. I prefer White's active knights to Black's bishop-pair.

2 The Schliemann Variation

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♙b5 f5 (D)



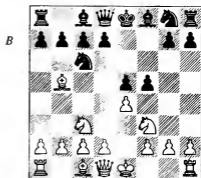
The Schliemann Variation is probably the sharpest way of meeting the Ruy Lopez. Black immediately goes on the counterattack in the centre, in King's Gambit fashion. Most positional considerations are overtaken by tactics and hard variations, so there's much more homework for the student here than in many of the other chapters. That said, a well-prepared player on the white side could certainly look forward to facing the Schliemann. After all, this line is fun for White too, but only if you know your stuff!

The Schliemann is quite popular at club level, where many white players refuse to take up the challenge and opt out with the passive 4 d3. However, this is just the type of move Schliemann players would enjoy playing

against, as Black is put under no immediate pressure and has been able to 'get away with' his third move. After, for instance, 4...fxe4 5 dxe4 ♘f6, Black already has a comfortable development plan and White no longer has a d-pawn! Instead of this, White must try to punish Black for his sins and thus I'm recommending the critical reply 4 ♘c3!

The Theory of the Schliemann

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♙b5 f5 4 ♘c3!
(D)



Black has three main options:

- A: 4...♘f6 19
B: 4...♘d4 19
C: 4...fxe4 21

A)

4...♟f6

On first impression this looks the most natural follow-up, but in fact it's not very popular due to the strength of White's reply.

5 exf5!

Whereas 4 exf5?! e4! would have embarrassed the knight, now 5...e4 can be effectively met by 6 ♞h4!. After 6...d5 7 d3 ♙e7 8 dxe4 dxe4 9 ♖xd8+ ♙xd8 10 ♙g5 0-0 11 0-0-0 White is simply a pawn to the good. If 5...♞d4 White should simply snatch another pawn with 6 ♞xe5, when 6...c6 7 ♙d3 d5 8 0-0 ♙d6 9 ♞f3 ♞xf5 10 ♙xf5 ♙xf5 11 ♖e1+ ♙e7 12 ♖e2 was clearly better for White in Chandler-Hermann, Bundesliga 1995/6, while 6...♙c5 7 0-0 0-0 transposes to the main line of this section.

5...♙c5 6 0-0 0-0 7 ♞xe5 ♞d4

Black's only chance to complicate, as 7...♞xe5 8 d4 is clearly in White's favour.

8 ♙d3 d5 9 ♞f3 c6

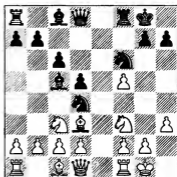
White is also a safe pawn up after 9...♞xf5 10 ♙xf5 ♙xf5 11 d4 ♙d6 12 ♞e5.

10 h3! (D)

Stronger than 10 b3?! ♞xf5 11 ♙xf5 ♙xf5 12 d4 ♙b4, when Black has some compensation for the pawn.

After 10 h3!, Ulybin-O.Rodriguez, Benasque 1992 continued 10...♞d7?! 11 ♞xd4 ♙xd4 12 ♞e2 ♙b6 13 c3 ♞e5 14 ♙c2 d4 15 cxd4 ♙xd4 16 ♞xd4 ♖xd4 17 d3 ♙xf5 18 ♙e3 ♖h4 19 f4! and White held a clear advantage. The straightforward 10...♞xf5 is stronger, although after 11 ♙xf5 ♙xf5

B

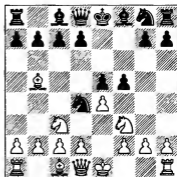


12 d4 ♙d6 13 ♞e5 ♞e4 14 ♞e2 Black doesn't have enough compensation.

B)

4...♞d4! (D)

W



A deceptively tricky move, which was first suggested by Alekhine. Black seems to break all the opening rules by following up 3...f5 with moving his one developed piece again, but 4...♞d4 is not as bad as it first looks, and should be treated with considerable care.

5 ♙c4!

Of course White has other playable moves, including 5 exf5 and 5 ♖a4, but this one asks Black the most questions; for example: where will he castle?

5...c6

Other moves for Black include:

a) 5...d6 6 d3 ♖f6 (6...♗e7 7 ♗xg8 ♗xg8 8 ♖xd4 exd4 9 ♖h5+ ♖f8 10 ♖d5 looks good for White) 7 ♖xd4! exd4 8 ♖e2 fxe4 9 dxe4 ♖xe4 (9...c5 10 0-0 ♖xe4 11 ♖f4 is clearly better for White) 10 ♖xd4 ♖f6 11 ♗g5 and White's lead in development had reached nearly decisive proportions in Abramović-Kovačević, Yugoslav Ch 1985.

b) 5...♖f6 6 d3 (6 0-0 ♖xf3+! 7 ♖xf3 fxe4 8 ♖xe4 c6 is less clear) 6...♖xf3+ 7 ♖xf3 f4 8 g3 g5 9 gxf4 gxf4 10 ♗xf4! exf4 11 e5 ♗b4 12 0-0-0 ♗xc3 13 bxc3 ♖c7 14 exf6 ♖xf6 15 ♗d1+ ♖d8 16 ♗e4 and White was clearly better in Tošić-Šahović, Vrnjačka Banja 1982.

6 0-0 d6

Black can also offer to sacrifice material with 6...♖f6. Emms-Tebb, British Ch (Norwich) 1994 continued 7 d3!? ♖xf3+ 8 ♖xf3 f4 9 ♗xf4!? exf4 10 e5 d5 11 exf6 ♖xf6 12 ♗fe1+ ♖d8 13 ♖xd5 cxd5 14 ♗xd5 ♗b8 15 d4 with a very unclear position. Instead of 7 d3, White should grab the material on offer with 7 ♖xe5 fxe4 8 ♖f7 ♖c7 9 ♖xh8. After 9...d5 10 ♗e2 ♗d6 11 h3 ♗f5 12 d3 it's difficult to believe Black has enough compensation.

7 exf5!

Sensibly opening the position up. Instead 7 ♗e1 ♖xf3+ 8 ♖xf3 f4 9 d4

♖f6 gives Black the type of position he wants, where the f4-pawn cramps the white pieces.

7...♗xf5

Once more Black has some other options:

a) 7...d5 8 ♖xe5 ♖f6 9 ♗e1 ♗e7 10 ♗d3 0-0 11 ♖e2 ♖xf5 12 ♗xf5 ♗xf5 13 d4 leads to a typically advantageous position for White, who is a pawn up and can boast an outpost for the knight on e5.

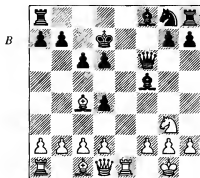
b) 7...♖xf5 8 d4 and now 8...exd4 9 ♗e1+ ♗e7 10 ♖xd4 is clearly better for White, while 8...d5 runs into 9 ♖xe5! dxc4 10 ♖h5+ g6 11 ♖xg6 ♖f6 12 ♖c2+ ♖e7 13 ♖xh8.

c) 7...♖xf3+ 8 ♖xf3 ♖f6 9 d4 exd4 10 ♗e1+ ♖d8 11 ♖e4 ♖xf5 12 ♖g3 gives White a clear plus, according to NCO.

8 ♖xd4 exd4 9 ♗e1+ ♖d7

Black has problems defending his d4-pawn after 9...♗e7 10 ♖e2.

10 ♖e2 ♖f6 11 ♖g3 (D)



We have been following Timman-Danov, Wijk aan Zee 1971, which

continued 11...♖e8 12 ♜xe8 ♘xe8 13 ♜e2+ ♘d7 14 c3 dxc3 15 dxc3, when White had a big lead in development.

C)

4...fxe4

Black's main continuation. The e-pawn is eliminated and Black prepares to occupy the centre, for one move at least!

5 ♖xe4

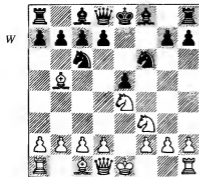
Now we deal with Black's two main choices:

C1: 5...♖f6 21

C2: 5...d5 22

C1)

5...♖f6 (D)



This line was unpopular for a long time, as White can virtually win a pawn by force by 6 ♖xf6+ ♜xf6 7 ♜e2. However, ways were then discovered of drumming up counterplay for Black.

6 ♖xf6+

When improvements for Black were being discovered in this line, White

started to try 6 ♜e2!?, but my impression is that Black's resources are sufficient in this line after 6...d5 7 ♖xf6+ gxf6 8 d4 ♖g7 9 dxe5 0-0! 10 ♖xc6 bxc6 11 e6 ♖e8 12 0-0 c5.

6...♜xf6

6...gxf6? is a mistake. After 7 d4 ♜e7 (or 7...e4 8 ♖g5!) 8 0-0 e4 9 d5! ♖d8 10 ♖e1 ♖g7 11 ♖h4 White had a crushing position in Emms-Sylvan, Copenhagen 1992.

7 ♜e2 ♖e7 8 ♖xc6 dxc6

8...♜xc6 9 ♜xc5 leaves Black struggling to castle, but 8...bxc6 is quite interesting. White should continue with 9 ♖xe5, when 9...c5 10 0-0 ♖b7 11 b3 0-0-0 12 ♖b2 was better for White in J.Diaz-Antunes, Santa Clara 1991, while 9...0-0 10 0-0 ♖d6 11 d4 c5 12 ♖e3 ♖xe5 13 ♜c4+ ♖f7 14 dxe5 ♜xe5 15 ♜xc5 also leaves White a clear pawn up.

9 ♖xe5 ♖f5

With this move Black keeps his options open regarding which side to castle. The other main line runs 9...0-0 10 0-0 ♖d6 11 d4 ♖f5 (11...c5 12 ♖e3 b6 13 f4 cxd4 14 ♖xd4 ♖b7 15 ♜g4 ♖ae8 16 ♖ad1 gave White the advantage in Kuporosov-Yandemirov, USSR 1986) 12 c3!? (12 f4 ♖xe5 13 dxe5 ♜g6 14 ♖f2 ♖ad8 leads to the position after Black's 15th move in Marjanović-Yilmaz, discussed in the next note) and now:

a) 12...♖ae8 13 ♖f4 ♖xe5 (not 13...♖d3?! 14 ♜xd3 ♜xf4, allowing 15 g3! and f4) 14 ♖xe5 ♜g6 15 ♖ad1 was clearly better for White in the game Dervishi-Khachian, Panormo Z 1998.

b) 12...c5 13 ♖f4 ♜ae8 14 ♞fe1 cxd4 15 cxd4 ♙e6 16 ♙g3 gave White an edge in Kotronias-Vouldis, Greek Ch 1992.

10 0-0!?

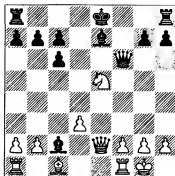
This move has hardly been seen, but it could well be the most testing move-order for Black. After 10 d4 Black obtains sufficient counterplay with 10...0-0-0 11 ♙e3 ♙d6 12 f4 ♙xe5 13 dxex5 ♖g6. Another commonly played move for White is 10 d3. Now 10...0-0-0 11 0-0 ♞he8 12 f4 ♙d6 13 ♞f2! ♜b8 14 ♙e3 gave White a clear plus in Glek-Arbakov, corr 1985. However, Black can switch back to 10...0-0!, underlining the flexibility of 9...♙f5. Following 11 0-0 ♙d6 12 f4 ♞ac8 13 d4 ♙xe5 14 dxex5 ♖g6 15 ♞f2 ♞d8 we reach a position typical for this line. Despite White's two-pawn majority on the kingside, the presence of opposite-coloured bishops makes it extremely difficult for White to convert his small advantage. After 16 ♙c3 ♞d5 17 a4 a5 18 ♞af1 h5 19 ♜h1 h4 20 h3 ♞fd8 Black had enough play in Marjanović-Yilmaz, Kavala 1985.

The point of 10 0-0!? is to answer 10...0-0-0 with 11 d3, as in Glek-Arbakov, and 10...0-0 with 11 d4, leading to the note to Black's 9th move. Of course Black does have another option, which is to grab the hot pawn.

10...♙xc2!? 11 d3 (D)

The only game I could find with 10...♙xc2 ended in a quick win for White after 11...0-0-0? 12 ♞e1 ♙d6 13 ♖g4+ ♜b8 14 ♙g5 and Black was obliged to resign in Zude-Brehm,

B

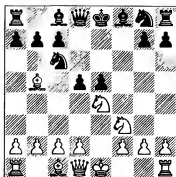


Hessen 1988. 11...♙a4 is a tougher defence, but White's initiative still seems quite daunting, for example 12 b3 (12 ♘g4 ♞f5 13 b3 ♙b5 14 ♙a3 0-0! shows the defensive resources in Black's position) 12...♙b5 13 ♙b2 and now 13...0-0-0? allows 14 ♖g4+, while 13...0-0 runs into 14 ♘d7. Perhaps Black can play 13...♞e6, but after 14 ♞fe1 there are still problems to solve. Certainly, this line could do with a practical test.

C2)

5...d5 (D)

W



This move leads to the most heavily analysed variations of the Schliemann. Play becomes extremely sharp and both sides must know their theory. After 5...d5, White has the option of retreating the knight with 6 ♖g3, a perfectly playable, though hardly critical reply. However, my recommendation is to play straight into the main line with...

6 ♜xe5! dxe4 7 ♜xc6

Now Black has three possible continuations:

C21: 7...bxc6 23

C22: 7...♞d5 24

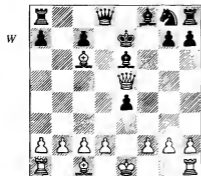
C23: 7...♞g5 25

C21)

7...bxc6

The least popular move. White can achieve a clear advantage in more than one way.

8 ♜xc6+ ♞d7 9 ♞h5+ ♚e7 10 ♞e5+ ♞e6 (D)



11 f4!?

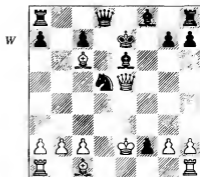
This is the critical move, although a safe plus can be achieved by the simple

11 ♜xa8 ♞xa8 12 ♞xc7+ ♚e8 13 0-0 ♜e7 14 d3 exd3 15 cxd3, when White's rook and three pawns outweigh the two minor pieces.

11...exf3

11...♜h6 12 f5 ♜xf5 13 ♞f1 is very strong, e.g. 13...♞d6 (13...♜h6?? 14 ♞c5+ ♞d6 15 ♞g5#) 14 ♞xe4 (14 ♞xd6+ ♚xd6 15 ♜xa8 c6 also looks favourable for White) 14...♞b8 15 ♞xf5 ♞b4 16 d4! ♞xd4 17 ♜g5+ ♚d6 18 ♜f4+ ♚e7 19 ♞xd4 ♞xd4 20 ♜c3 ♜xf5 21 ♜xd4 and White is clearly better.

12 d4 ♜f6 13 d5 f2+ 14 ♚e2 ♜xd5 (D)



15 ♞d1!

I believe this is the most effective way to reach a clear plus. 15 ♜g5+ is less clear after 15...♜f6 16 ♞hd1 ♞c8 17 ♞d7+ (17 ♜xa8 ♞xa8 18 ♜xf6+ gxh6 19 ♞xc7+ ♚e8 is also a mess) 17...♞xd7 18 ♜xd7 ♚xd7 19 ♞b5+ ♚c7 20 ♜xf2 ♜f7 and Black was not worse in Kovalevsky-Lubarsky, USSR 1968.

15...♞d6

15...♙f7 16 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 17 ♜f5+ ♗e8 18 ♜xd5 wins for White, while 15...♗c3+ 16 ♜xc3 ♜xd1+ 17 ♙xf2 ♜d6 18 ♖xa8 ♜xh2 19 ♖g5+ is also strong.

16 ♜xd6+ ♙xd6 17 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 18 c4 c6 19 ♖f4+ ♗e6 20 cxd5+ cxd5 21 ♜ac1

This endgame is most unpleasant for Black.

C22)

7...♜d5 8 c4 ♜d6 9 ♗xa7+!

White may also play 9 ♜h5+ g6 10 ♜e5+ ♜xe5 11 ♗xe5+ c6 12 ♖a4, although after 12...♖g7! 13 d4 exd3 Black seems to have enough counter-chances, e.g. 14 ♖f4 ♗f6 15 0-0-0 ♖f5 16 ♗xd3 0-0-0 17 ♖c2 ♜d4 18 ♖e3 ♜xc4 and Black is fine, or 14 0-0 ♖f5 (14...♖xe5? 15 ♜e1! is better for White) 15 ♜e1 0-0-0 16 ♖g5 (16 ♗f7 d2 17 ♖xd2 ♜xd2 18 ♜e8+ ♗d7 19 ♜ae1 ♜xb2 is better for Black) 16...d2 17 ♜e3 ♜f8 and Mikhail Tseitlin favours Black.

9...♖d7 10 ♖xd7+ ♜xd7 11 ♜h5+!

Much more critical than 11 ♗b5 ♗f6 12 0-0 ♖c5, which gives Black good play for the two-pawn deficit.

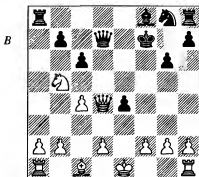
11...g6

11...♗d8 favours White after 12 ♜a5! ♗e8 13 0-0 ♗f6 14 d4 exd3 15 ♖c3.

12 ♜e5+ ♙f7 13 ♗b5!

Capturing the black rook immediately by 13 ♜xh8 is dangerous in view of 13...♗f6 14 ♗b5 c6 15 ♗c3 ♜e8, when White must give up his queen in less favourable circumstances.

13...c6 14 ♜d4 (D)



14...♜e7

Black chooses complications over an inferior endgame, which he gets with either alternative:

a) 14...♜d8 15 ♜xd7+ ♜xd7 16 ♗c3 ♗f6 17 b3 favours White.

b) 14...♜xd4 15 ♗xd4 ♖g7 16 ♗e2 ♜a4 17 b3 ♜xc4 18 bxc4 ♖xa1 19 0-0 and again White is better.

15 ♜xh8

Grabbing the rook must be correct. Black has enough counterplay after 15 ♗c3 ♗f6 16 ♜e3 ♜d8.

15...♗f6 16 b3 ♜d8

16...♜e8 17 ♖b2 ♖g7 18 ♖a3! c5 19 ♜xc8+ ♗xe8 20 ♜d1 is much better for White than the main variation, as the d5-square beckons as an important outpost.

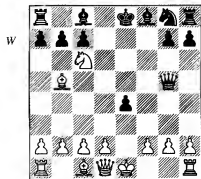
17 ♖b2 ♖g7 18 ♖a3 ♜d7 19 ♗d6+ ♗e6 20 ♜xd8 ♜xd8 21 ♗xb7 ♜c7 22 ♗c5+ ♙f7 23 ♖b2

But not 23 0-0 ♗g4!. After 23 ♖b2 White's two rooks and three pawns should overcome the black queen. In Todorov-Boudre, Cannes 1997, White

kept the advantage after 23...♖f4 24 0-0-0 ♖f5 25 ♙d4 ♘h5 26 g4 ♖xg4 27 ♙xg7 ♘xg7 28 ♚he1 ♖f5 29 ♘xe4.

C23)

7...♖g5 (D)



The main line. This move was given a boost when it was adopted by Jon Speelman in a 1989 Candidates match against Jan Timman. Speelman reached a level position and went on to win the game. Since then, however, new ideas have been found for White, and Black is once more struggling to equalize.

8 ♖e2 ♘f6

8...♖xg2??? loses to 9 ♖h5+ ♘d7 (or 9...g6 10 ♖e5+ ♘d7 11 ♘b8+ ♘d8 12 ♖e8#) 10 ♖f7+.

9 f4

Now we have a further branch:

C231: 9...♖h4+ 25

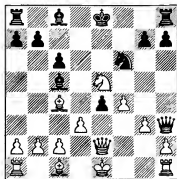
C232: 9...♖xf4 26

C231)

9...♖h4+ 10 g3 ♖h3 11 ♘e5+ c6 12 ♙c4 ♙c5 13 d3! (D)

13 c3 is also feasible, but I prefer to prepare queenside castling as soon as possible.

B



13...♘g4

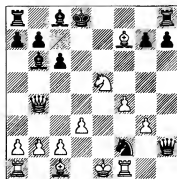
Black has to continue actively. After 13...exd3? 14 ♙xd3 0-0 15 ♙d2, followed by 0-0-0, White is winning.

14 ♖xe4! ♘f2 15 ♙f7+ ♘d8

15...♘f8 loses to 16 ♖c4 b6 17 ♚f1, while White also keeps a clear advantage after 15...♘e7 16 ♖c4 ♙b6 17 ♚f1 ♖xh2 18 ♖b4+ c5 19 ♖d2.

16 ♖c4 ♙b6 17 ♚f1 ♖xh2 18 ♖b4 (D)

B

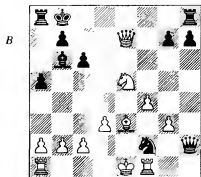


18...♙f5

18...♙c7 won quickly for White in Konikowski-Roose, corr 1974, after 19 ♙e3 ♘g4 20 ♙xb6+ axb6 21 ♖e7+ ♗b8 22 0-0-0 ♖xg3 23 ♗d6+ ♗a7 24 ♚f3!

19 ♗d6+ ♗c8 20 ♙e6+ ♙xe6 21 ♖xe6+ ♗b8 22 ♖e7 a5 23 ♙e3! (D)

23 ♖xg7 is not so clear in view of 23...♗a7 24 ♘xc6+ ♗a6!



NCO stops here with an assessment of 'clearly better for White', but perhaps we should look a little further. After the forced sequence 23...♙xe3 24 ♘xc6+ bxc6 25 ♖xe3 White has a strong attack for the piece, for example:

a) 25...♘g4 26 ♖b6+ ♗c8 27 ♖xc6+ ♗b8 28 ♖b6+ ♗c8 29 0-0-0 and now 29...♖xg3 loses to 30 ♖c6+ ♗b8 31 ♚f3 ♖g2 32 d4! and the rook swings across decisively.

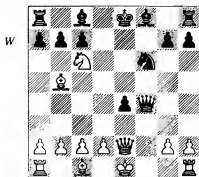
b) 25...♘d3+ (returning the sacrificed piece looks to be Black's best chance) 26 cxd3 (26 ♖xd3 ♚e8+ 27 ♗d1 ♗c7 is unclear) 26...♖xb2 and now 27 ♖e5+ ♖xe5+ 28 fxe5 gives

White an endgame advantage, while White could also consider 27 ♚c1!?

C232)

9...♖xf4 (D)

This is Black's most popular move.

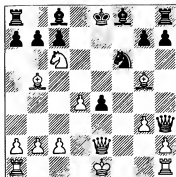


10 ♙e5+

10 d4!? is an underrated idea. Kamsky-Piket, Groningen 1995 continued 10...♖d6 11 ♙e5+ c6 12 ♙c4 ♙e6 (12...♖xd4 13 ♙f7+ ♗e7 14 ♙f4 looks too dangerous for Black) 13 c3 ♙xc4 14 ♘xc4 ♖e6 15 0-0 (Kamsky gives 15 ♙f4 as a good alternative) 15...♙e7 16 ♙g5 0-0 17 ♚ae1 and White was slightly better. Of course Black could try to steer the game back to the main line with 10...♖h4+ 11 g3 ♖h3. Now 12 ♙e5+ c6 13 ♙c4 would transpose to the main line, but White could also try the little-played 12 ♙g5!? (D).

This move does have some pedigree, as it was played by Fischer in a blitz game, and it does seem to cause Black problems. Fischer-Matulović, Herceg Novi blitz 1970 continued

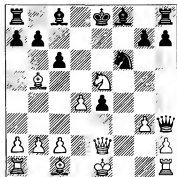
B



13...♙d7 14 ♖xf6 gxf6 15 ♜xe4+ ♗f7 16 ♘e5+ fxe5 17 ♞f1+ ♗e7 18 ♙xd7 ♗xd7 19 ♞f7+ ♗e8 20 ♞xc7 ♙d6 21 ♞xb7 and White went on to win. It's possible that there are some improvements for Black in this line, but in any case I also like the look of 17 ♙c4+ (instead of Fischer's 17 ♞f1+), for example 17...♙e6 18 ♞f1+ ♗g8 19 ♜h4!! and the endgame will be very nice for White. Food for thought!

10...c6 11 d4 ♜h4+ 12 g3 ♜h3 (D)

W



13 ♙c4 ♙e6

Black mustn't allow the check on f7. Emms-Timmerman, Gent 1990 continued 13...♙d6?! 14 ♙f7+ ♗e7 15 ♙b3 ♙e6 16 ♙f4 ♞hf8 17 0-0-0 and White was comfortably better.

14 ♙f4!?

The alternative 14 ♙g5 lost some of its popularity after the Timman-Speelman game, but it should still give Black problems. After 14...0-0-0 15 0-0-0 ♙d6 White can try the interesting 16 g4!? (Timman played 16 ♘f7 but got nothing after 16...♙xf7 17 ♙xf7 ♞hf8) 16...♙xc4 17 ♜xc4 and now:

a) 17...♞he8 18 ♞dg1! (the point of 16 g4: White plans to trap the black queen) 18...♙e5 19 dxe5 ♞xe5 20 ♞g3 ♜xg3 21 hxg3 ♞xg5 22 ♜e6+ ♗c7 23 ♞h5! and White is better.

b) 17...♙e5 18 dxe5 ♜xg4 (the alternative 18...♞xd1+ 19 ♞xd1 ♜xg4 20 ♙e3! ♘d7 21 ♜f7 ♘xe5 22 ♜e7 ♘g6 23 ♜xg7 was good for White in Donchev-Inkirov, Bulgarian Ch 1989) 19 ♞dg1 ♞d1+ (19...♜f5? 20 exf6 gxf6 21 ♙e3 was winning for White in Brynell-Wieweg, Stockholm Rilton Cup 1993/4) 20 ♞xd1 ♜xg5+ 21 ♗b1 ♜xe5 22 ♜f7 with an edge to White according to Nunn (NCO).

14...0-0-0

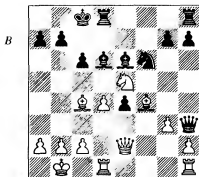
After 14...♞d8 15 0-0-0 ♙d6 Bologan came up with the important novelty 16 ♙g5!, which causes Black lots of headaches:

a) 16...0-0 17 ♜f1! wins material after 17...♗h8 18 ♜hx3 ♙hx3 19 ♘f7+ or 17...♘d5 18 ♜hx3 ♙hx3 19 ♙xd8.

b) After 16...♜f5, Bologan-Chandler, Bundesliga 1993/4 went 17 ♙xf6 gxf6 18 ♞hf1 and White was slightly

better, while Bologan suggests 17 h4! as being even stronger.

15 0-0-0 ♗d6 16 ♖b1 (D)

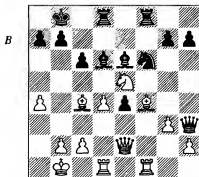


16...♞hf8

White also keeps an edge after 16...♞he8 17 ♞hf1, when 17...♞e7 is better than 17...♗xe5? 18 ♗xe6+! ♜xe6 19 dxe5 ♞xd1+ 20 ♞xd1 with a

big advantage for White, Popović-Inkiöv, Palma de Mallorca 1989.

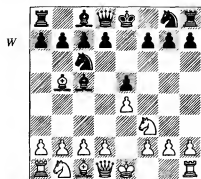
17 ♞hf1 ♖b8 18 a4! (D)



White keeps the advantage. Lutz-Yagupov, Groningen 1995 continued 18...♖a8 19 a5 ♗xc4 20 ♜xc4, when the positional threat of a6 caused Black some aggravation.

3 The Classical Variation

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♙c6 3 ♖b5 ♗c5 (D)



3...♗c5 is a very natural and active move. However, it has never been really popular because it runs straight into White's basic plan of c3 and d4. As this can hardly be prevented, Black must be prepared to lose time by moving this bishop again. Nevertheless, there is a plus side in that that the bishop will be actively placed on the a7-g1 diagonal, where it can exert pressure on White's centre. Black's main problem is that it is difficult for him to maintain his pawn on e5, where it comes under considerable attack.

White's two main options after 3...♗c5 are 4 c3 and 4 0-0. Out of these two I'm opting for the slightly more flexible 4 0-0, which also rules out having to learn the unclear consequences of 4 c3 f5!?

The Theory of the Classical Variation

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♙c6 3 ♖b5 ♗c5 4 0-0

Black now has three main possibilities:

- | | |
|-------------|----|
| A: 4...♗ge7 | 30 |
| B: 4...♗d4 | 30 |
| C: 4...♗f6 | 31 |

Other tries which deserve a mention are:

a) 4...d6 5 c3 ♗d7 6 d4 ♗b6 7 ♗g5 ♗f6 (7...f6 8 ♗c3 ♗ge7 9 ♙a3 0-0 10 ♗c4 ♗g6 11 ♘xb6 axb6 was slightly better for White in Romanovsky-Kubbel, USSR Ch 1925) 8 dxe5 ♗xc5 9 ♗xe5 dxe5 (9...♗xb5? 10 ♗xf7! ♗xf7 11 ♖b3+ and 12 ♖xb5 is good for White) 10 ♗xf6 gxf6 11 ♗xd7+ ♖xd7 12 ♖xd7+ ♗xd7 13 ♗d2 and Black's pawn weaknesses on the kingside give White an edge.

b) 4...♖f6 5 d3! (this quiet move is the best way to exploit Black's premature queen sortie) 5...h6 (a necessary pawn move because 5...♗ge7 6 ♗g5 ♖e6 7 ♗c3 looks ugly for Black) 6 ♗e3! ♗b6 7 c4 ♗d4 8 ♗xd4 exd4 9 e5 ♖g6 10 b4 c5 11 bxc5 ♗xc5 12 ♗bd2! ♖xd3 13 ♗b3 ♖xd1 14 ♖axd1 ♗b6 15 c5 ♗d8 16 ♗bxd4 and White's pieces totally dominate the board, Runnby-Ekström, Swedish Ch 1979.

A)

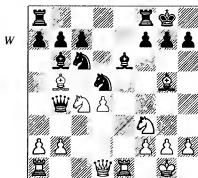
4...♖ge7

Black wishes to develop quickly and hit back in the centre with ...d5. This line has similarities to 3...♖ge7 4 c3 g6 (see Chapter 1, Line E).

5 c3 ♖b6 6 d4 exd4 7 cxd4 d5 8 exd5 ♖xd5 9 ♖e1+ ♖e6 10 ♖g5 ♖d6 11 ♖bd2 0-0

Chasing the bishop with 11...h6 runs into 12 ♖e4 ♖b4 13 ♖xc6+ bxc6 14 ♖c1!, when Black has serious problems. Ulybin-Gretarsson, Stockholm 1997 continued 14...hxg5 15 ♖xc6+ ♖e7 16 a3 ♖xb2 17 ♖exg5 ♖f4 18 ♖e4 ♖e2+ 19 ♖xe2 ♖xe2 20 ♖xe2 ♖ad8 21 ♖ae1 ♖d6 22 ♖e5! 1-0.

12 ♖c4 ♖b4 (D)



13 a4!?

13 ♖xc6 bxc6 14 ♖c1 also promises White an advantage, but the text-move is more ambitious.

13...♖d8!

13...a6?! 14 ♖xc6 bxc6 15 ♖c1 ♖a7 16 ♖d2 ♖b7 17 ♖c2 ♖b4 18 ♖b3! gave White a clear plus in the game V.Ivanov-Rodin, Russia 1994. 13...♖d8

is a suggested improvement, but White can still keep an advantage.

14 ♖a3 f6 15 ♖d2 ♖e7 16 a5 c6 17 axb6 cxb5 18 ♖xa7 ♖c6 19 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 20 ♖a3

Black doesn't have enough for the pawn deficit.

B)

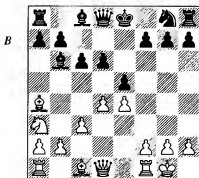
4...♖d4

Black hopes to ease his problems with a simplifying move.

5 ♖xd4 ♖xd4

5...exd4 transposes to the Bird's Defence (see Chapter 1).

6 c3 ♖b6 7 d4 c6 8 ♖a4 d6 9 ♖a3 (D)



9...♖f6

There are two other tries for Black:

a) 9...♖c7 10 d5! ♖d7 11 dxc6 bxc6 12 ♖c4 ♖e7 13 f4 was good for White in Ljubojević-Durão, Orense 1974.

b) 9...exd4 10 cxd4 ♖e7 11 d5! (this important move gives White an edge) 11...0-0 12 dxc6 bxc6 13 ♖g5 f6 14 ♖f4 d5 15 ♖e1 ♖e6 16 ♖b3 ♖d7

17 exd5 ♖xd5 18 ♖c4 ♜fd8 (not 18...♖xf4? losing to 19 ♜xd7 20 ♖xb6+) 19 ♜g3 and Black's weak pawns gave White something to bite onto in Khalifman-Montecatini, Seville 1993.

10 ♜g5 h6

The usual move. After 10...0-0 I like 11 ♖c4 ♜c7 12 ♜c2! ♜e6 13 ♖e3, leaving Black to decide how to deal with the uncomfortable pin on the f6-knight.

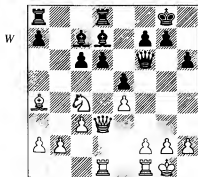
11 ♜xf6 ♜xf6 12 d5 ♜d7 13 ♖c4 ♜c7 14 dxc6

Leaving Black with a vulnerable d6-pawn.

14...bxc6 15 ♜d3 0-0 16 ♜ad1

The sharp 16 f4!? should also be considered, e.g. 16...exf4 17 e5 ♜f5 18 ♜xd6! ♜xd6 (18...♜xd6 19 exd6 ♜b6+ 20 ♖xb6 axb6 21 ♜xc6 wins for White) 19 exf6 ♜c5+ 20 ♖h1 g5 21 ♖e5! and White is well on top.

16...♜fd8 (D)



The pressure on the d6- and c6-pawns makes Black's life rather uncomfortable. One possible plan for

White here is 17 ♖e3!?, aiming to obtain the d5-square as an outpost after playing b4-b5. Also possible is the more direct 17 ♜d2, aiming to treble on the d-file, although after 17...♜ab8 18 ♜fd1 Black can try the complicated 18...d5!?. Then 19 ♖e3 d4 20 cxd4 ♜b4 21 dxe5! (21 ♜a6? exd4 left Black well placed in G.Todorović-J.Petrović, Yugoslavia 1992) 21...♜xe5 22 ♜a6 ♜xh2+ 23 ♖f1 leads to a very messy position, although I still prefer White.

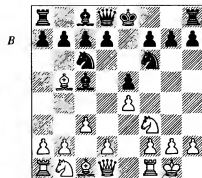
C)

4...♖f6

The main variation. Black counterattacks by hitting White's e4-pawn.

5 c3 (D)

There are other moves, including 5 ♖xe5 and 5 ♖c3, but this is the most logical. White aims to build up the usual pawn-centre.



Now Black has two possible continuations:

C1: 5...♖xe4!? 32

C2: 5...0-0 32

C1)

5...♟xe4!?

This move has been surprisingly neglected. True, it looks very risky to grab the e4-pawn, but no convincing refutation has been found.

6 ♞e2!?

Also enticing is 6 d4!? exd4 (if 6...♟b6, then 7 ♞e2 f5 8 dxe5 0-0 9 ♟bd2 is good for White) 7 cxd4 ♟e7 (7...♟b6 8 d5 ♟e7 9 ♟g5 gives White a healthy initiative, according to Kengis) 8 d5 ♟d6 9 ♟a4 ♟a5 10 ♟f4 0-0 11 ♟bd2 b6 12 ♞c1 ♟ab7 13 ♞e1 with a strong initiative for the pawn, Lanka-Malaniuk, Odessa 1988.

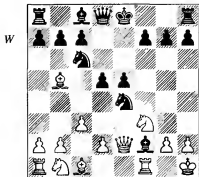
6...♟xf2+!

The most testing. Some sources just give 6...f5 7 d3, which of course is clearly better for White.

7 ♞h1!

Things are not so clear after 7 ♞xf2 ♟xf2 8 ♞xf2 f6 (or 8...0-0!?).

7...d5 (D)



8 c4!?

I can find no practical examples of this move, which is a direct attempt at

a refutation of Black's play. Other moves include:

a) 8 d3 ♟g3+ 9 hxg3 ♟xg3 with a messy position where the three pawns and White's airy king balance the extra piece.

b) 8 ♞xf2 ♟xf2+ 9 ♞xf2 ♞e7 10 d4 f6 11 ♟xc6+ bxc6 12 b3 e4 13 ♟a3 ♞f7 with another unclear position, Boudre-McMahon, Massy 1993.

8...0-0

Black has a long list of alternatives, but there's no easy path:

a) 8...♟d4 9 ♟xd4 exd4 10 cxd5 ♞xd5 11 ♟xc6+ ♞xc6 12 d3 f5 13 ♟d2 wins for White.

b) 8...♟g4 9 cxd5 ♞xd5 10 ♟c4 ♞c5 11 ♞xe4 f5 12 ♞d5 ♟xf3 13 gxf3 also wins.

c) 8...♟b6!? 9 cxd5 ♞xd5 10 ♟c4 ♟d4 11 ♟xd5 ♟g3+ 12 hxg3 ♟xe2 13 ♞h2, when White's extra piece outweighs the two pawns.

d) 8...f5 9 cxd5 ♞xd5 10 ♟c3! ♟xc3 11 dxc3 ♟c5 12 ♟xe5 and again Black is in trouble.

9 cxd5 ♟d4

9...♞xd5 loses a piece to 10 ♟c4!.

With the text-move Black traps the white queen, but has to give up three minor pieces in return.

10 ♞xe4

Not 10 ♟xd4 ♞h4!.

10...♟f5 11 ♞xe5 f6 12 ♞f4 g5 13 ♟xd4 gxf4 14 ♟xf5 ♟b6 15 d4

White's three pieces outweigh the black queen. This whole line could definitely use a practical test.

C2)

5...0-0

The popular choice. Black gets on with some necessary development.

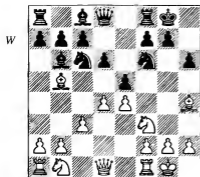
6 d4 ♖b6

Planning to counter 7 dxe5 with 7...♗xe4. Giving up the centre with 6...exd4 cannot be recommended. After 7 cxd4 ♖b6 8 e5 ♔d5 9 ♖g5 ♗e8 10 ♔c3 ♗xc3 11 bxc3 White's better development gives him a distinct advantage.

7 ♖g5

White's choice includes 7 ♖e1, 7 dxe5 and 7 ♖xc6, but pinning the knight is considered the most dangerous continuation for Black.

7...h6 8 ♖h4 d6 (D)



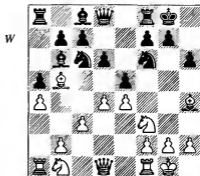
9 a4!

White has to be a little careful. At first sight White can play 9 ♖xc6 bxc6 10 dxe5 dxe5 and then win a pawn by 11 ♗xd8 ♖xd8 12 ♗xe5, but after 12...g5! 13 ♖g3 ♗xe4 14 ♗xc6 ♖a6! Black has a very active position. Better than 11 ♗xd8 is the calm 11 ♗bd2. After 11...♖e8 12 ♗c2 g5 13 ♖g3 ♗h5 14 c4! ♗xg3 15 hxg3 ♗e7 16 ♗b3 ♖c5 17 ♗c3 ♖b8 18 a3 ♖g4

19 ♗xc5 ♗xc5 20 b4 White held a slight edge in Almasi-Gulko, Pamplona 1996/7. If White wishes to avoid the complications of the main line, this looks like the way to play it.

9...a5 (D)

9...a6? is a mistake due to 10 ♖xc6 bxc6 11 a5 ♖a7 12 dxe5 dxe5 13 ♗xd8 ♖xd8 14 ♗xe5 g5 15 ♖g3 ♗xe4 16 ♗xc6 and not only is the knight forking rook and bishop, but Black no longer has the ...♖a6 resource discussed in the last note.



10 ♖e1 exd4

10...♗e7 11 ♗a3 ♖g4 12 ♗c4 g5 13 ♖g3 ♗d7 14 ♗e3 was better for White in Spassky-Quinones, Amsterdam IZ 1964. Black's main alternative is the complicated pawn sacrifice 10...♖g4!? 11 ♖xc6 bxc6 12 dxe5 dxe5 13 ♗xd8 ♖axd8 14 ♗xe5 g5 15 ♖g3 and now:

a) 15...h5 16 ♗xg4 (16 ♗xc6 ♖de8 17 ♗d2 ♖d7 18 e5 ♗d5 19 c4 ♖xc6 20 cxd5 ♖xd5 is less clear) 16...♗xg4 17 h3 h4 18 ♖xh4 gxh4 19 hxg4 ♗h7 20 ♗f1 ♖g8 21 f3 ♖d3 22 ♗a3 h3 23

♖c4 ♜g8 (23...h2? 24 ♜e2 ♜g8 25 ♜h1 led to a winning position in Shmatkov-Mukhaev, Moscow 1995) 24 ♖xb6 cxb6 25 ♜f2 with a clear advantage to White.

b) 15...♖xe4 16 ♖xg4 f5 17 ♖a3 ♖xg3 18 ♖xh6+ ♜g7 19 hxg3 ♜d2 20 ♖c4! ♜xf2+ 21 ♜f1 ♜xe1 22 ♜xe1 ♜d3 23 ♜e6 ♜d1+ 24 ♜f2 ♜h1 25 ♜xc6 ♜f6 26 ♜xc7+ ♜xh6 27 ♜c5 and White eventually won the ending in Anand-Torre, Manila IZ 1990.

11 ♜xc6 bxc6 12 ♖xd4 ♜d7

12...♜e8 13 ♖d2 c5 14 ♖4f3 ♜b7 15 ♜c2 gave White an edge in Thorsteins-Spassky, Reykjavik 1985.

13 ♖d2 ♜e8 14 ♜f3 g5 15 ♜g3 (D)

Black has the two bishops, but the weaknesses created by the ...g5 lunge give White real hopes of a kingside attack.

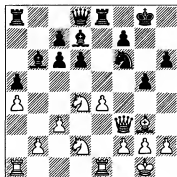
15...h5 16 h3!

Stronger than 16 h4 ♖g4! 17 hxg5 ♜xg5 and 16 e5 dxe5 17 ♜xe5 ♖g4, both of which are fine for Black.

The text-move is a suggestion from Macieja.

16...h4 17 ♜h2 g4

B



Macieja gives 17...♜xd4 18 cxd4 ♜e6 19 e5 ♜e7 as equal, but after 20 ♜d1! (NCO) Black's weak kingside still gives him problems.

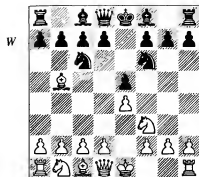
18 ♜f4! gxh3 19 ♖2f3! hxg2

19...♖g4 20 gxh3 ♖xh2 21 ♜xh2 leaves the black king horribly exposed.

With the text-move (19...hxg2), we are still following Macieja's analysis, which stops with 20 e5, claiming a strong attack for White. This does seem to be true, e.g. 20...♖d5 21 ♜h6 ♜xd4 22 ♖xd4 c5 23 ♜e4!, planning to meet 23...cxd4 with 24 ♜xh4.

4 The Berlin Defence

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♚c6 3 ♙b5 ♘f6 (D)

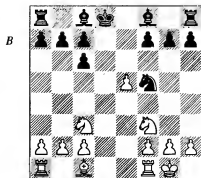


The Berlin Defence is one of Black's most solid and reliable ways of meeting the Ruy Lopez. Recently it has found its way into the repertoires of some of the world's leading young players, including Alexei Shirov and Vladimir Kramnik, while it has also been a long-time favourite of Britain's first grandmaster, Tony Miles. Being such a solid defence, there is the drawback that Black finds it difficult to create winning chances if White is content to play for a draw, but of course, this accusation could be levelled at most black defences.

The Berlin Endgame

The main line of the Berlin Defence gives rise to an endgame after the moves 1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♚c6 3 ♙b5 ♘f6

4 0-0 ♗xe4 5 d4 ♘d6 6 ♙xc6 dxc6 7 dxe5 ♘f5 8 ♗xd8+ ♚xd8. After White's most flexible move, 9 ♘c3 (D), we reach the following position.



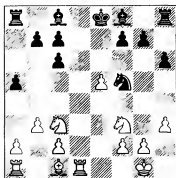
At first glance the pawn-structure seems to give White a persistent advantage. After all, White has a healthy 4-3 majority on the kingside, while Black should find it difficult to create a passed pawn from his own queenside majority, due to the doubled pawns. However, there are also some factors favouring Black. For example, White's advanced pawn on e5 presents Black with squares on f5 and d5. The e5-pawn could actually become quite weak if it's not well supported. Another plus for Black is that he possesses the bishop-pair.

In fact, White's best chance for an advantage lies in the slightly vulnerable

position of the black king, which has lost the right to castle and prevents the black rooks from connecting. White must play actively and attempt to exploit this temporary disharmony in the black position in order to create a concrete positional or tactical advantage.

The ...♖b4xc3 Exchange

This surprising exchange is one of Black's most potent weapons in the Berlin Endgame. At first sight, it appears a little strange just to give away the advantage of the bishop-pair, but following the trade, the presence of opposite-coloured bishops considerably eases Black's defensive task. Light-square control on the kingside makes it very difficult for White to mobilize his pawn majority, while it's also possible that White's pawns can end up as targets. Witness the following impressive display by Vishy Anand.

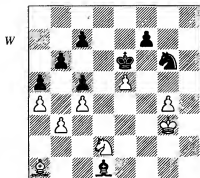


Fritz 5 – Anand
Frankfurt 1998

12...♖b4 13 ♖b2??! ♕xc3! 14 ♕xc3 c5 15 ♖d2 b6 16 ♖ad1 ♖e6 17 a4 ♖e7 18 ♖e1 g5 19 f3 ♖c6 20 ♖f2 ♖e7

Black is already very comfortable, if not better, due to the weak e5-pawn.

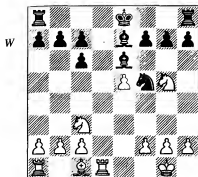
21 ♖b2 ♖hd8 22 c4 ♖xd2+ 23 ♖xd2 ♖f5 24 ♖e3 ♖d8 25 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 26 f4 gxf4+ 27 ♖xf4 ♖b1 28 ♖f3 ♖c2 29 ♖d2 ♖e6+ 30 ♖f3 ♖f8 31 ♖e3 ♖g7 32 g4 ♖g6 33 ♖f3 h5 34 ♖f2 hxg4 35 hxg4 ♖d1 36 ♖g3 ♖g7 37 ♖h4 ♖f8 38 ♖a1 ♖e7 39 ♖g3 ♖f8 40 ♖b2 ♖e6 41 ♖a1 ♖g6 (D)



The e5-pawn is lost and White's queenside pawns are extremely vulnerable. This opening was an inspired choice against the computer, which obviously didn't appreciate the positional subtleties of the endgame. Most humans would normally meet ...♖b4 with ♖c3-e2 or ♖c3-e4, in either case retaining the knight.

White Plays ♖g5x♖e6

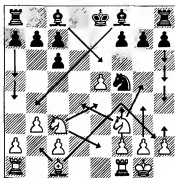
Similarly, this exchange is one of White's weapons.



J. Polgar – Smyslov
Monaco 1994

Play continued 12 Qxe6! fxe6 13 Qe4 and we can see that the exchange has favoured White. Black no longer possesses the bishop-pair, and White can still advance his pawn majority on the kingside. Another point is that White's e5-pawn is less vulnerable, as Black no longer has the long-term option of ... Qe6 to attack it.

The Main Ideas



Since Black will find it difficult to connect rooks, he often tries to activate them on their original squares. In such cases it's common for Black to play ... a5-a4 to activate his a8-rook. Sometimes Black may even play ... h5-h4 to give the h8-rook some scope. It could then go to h5, where it could attack the e5-pawn. Black normally develops his bishops on e6 and b4 and often leaves the e7-square free for a possible knight retreat.

White's main plan will be to try to activate his kingside pawn majority. Hence the need for moves such as h3, which supports a later g4. The f3-knight will want to move so White can create a pawn roller with f4. Normally the bishop goes to b2, but on occasions it can also go to f4, perhaps dropping back to g3 or h2, from where it can support White's pawn advance.

The Theory of the Berlin Defence

1 e4 e5 2 Qf3 Qc6 3 Qb5 Qf6 4 0-0 Qxe4

Other moves usually lead to positions discussed elsewhere, e.g.:

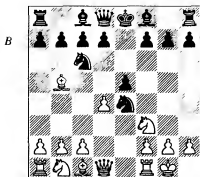
a) 4... Qe7 5 Qc3 d6 6 d4 Qd7 and we reach a position discussed in Chapter 1, Line B.

b) 4... d6 5 d4 Qd7 6 Qc3 and again we reach Chapter 1, Line B.

c) 4... Qc5 transposes to Chapter 3. 5 d4! (D)

This is White's strongest move. The other attempt at 'breaking the Berlin Wall' is with 5 Qe1 , but most top

players believe that Black has no problems after 5...d6 6 Qxe5 Qe7 7 Qd3 0-0.



Black has two main defences here:

- A: 5...Qe7 38
 B: 5...d6 40

Other tries are:

a) 5...xd4?! (too risky) 6 Qe1 f5 7 Qxd4 Qxd4 (7...Qc5 loses to 8 Qxc4+! fxe4 9 Wh5+ and 10 Wxc5) 8 Wxd4 c6 9 f3 cxb5 10 fxe4 Wb6 11 exf5+ Qf7 12 Qe3 Wxd4 13 Qxd4 d6 14 Qc3 Qxf5 15 Qe3 Qg8 16 Qd5 and Black was under severe pressure in Rozentalis-Kaminski, Polish Cht (Krynica) 1997.

b) 5...a6 isn't a bad transpositional move, after which White should play 6 Qa4, reaching the Open Defence (see Chapter 7).

A)

5...Qe7 6 We2 Qd6

The safest move. Other attempts allow White to achieve a very quick initiative:

a) 6...f5 7 dxe5 0-0 8 Qbd2 d5 9 exd6 Qxd6 10 Qxc6 bxc6 11 Qe5 and White has a clear advantage.

b) 6...d5 is a sterner defence, but White is still better after 7 Qxe5 Qd7 8 Qxc6 Qxc6 (8...bxc6 9 Qe1 Qf8 10 Qc3 Qxc3 11 bxc3 Qe8 12 Wa6 with a clear advantage, Em.Lasker-Scheve, Berlin sim 1891) 9 Qe1 Qd7 (9...0-0? 10 f3! wins material) 10 Qf4 c6 (10...0-0!? 11 Qd2! {11 f3 Qg5 is not so clear} 11...Qxd2 12 Qxd7! Qe8 13 Wb5 Qc4 14 Wxd5 Qxb2 15 Qab1 c6 16 Wf5 is good for White) 11 Qd2 Qxd2 12 Qxd2 and Black has problems completing development, as 12...Qe6 loses to 13 Qxf7! Qxf7 14 Qb4.

7 Qxc6 bxc6

Recapturing with 7...dxc6 allows White to reach a menacing position after 8 dxe5 Qf5 9 Qd1 Qd7. Here White can try the enticing 10 e6!? fxe6 11 Qe5 Qd6 12 Wh5+ g6 13 Qxg6, but in fact things are not so easy after 13...Qg7 14 Wh6 Qf5 15 Wh3 Qg8 16 Wxh7 Qg7 17 Wh5 Wf6!. Now 18 Wh8+ Qf7 19 Wxa8 Wxg6 gives Black far too much play for the exchange, while even after the stronger 18 Qc5+ Qe7 19 Qg4 Wh4 20 Wxh4+ Qxh4 21 h3 e5 Black still has some compensation for the pawn. In view of all this, White should consider the more restrained 10 Qc3 0-0 11 Qe4, which certainly keeps a nice spatial advantage, while Black loses more time unravelling from the pin on the d-file.

8 dxe5 Qb7

Why here rather than the more active f5-square? Well, after 8...Qf5

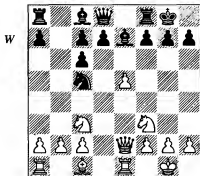
White should play aggressively with 9 ♖e4! g6 10 ♘d4 ♘xd4 11 ♗xd4. Now 11...0-0 12 ♙h6 ♖e8 13 ♘c3 d5 14 exd6 ♙f6 15 ♗a4 cxd6 16 ♗xc6 ♙f5 17 ♖ae1 led to a large advantage for White in Taimanov-Nikitin, USSR 1970. A more recent attempt to improve on Black's play is with the interesting move 11...d5. The point is that after 12 exd6 0-0! 13 ♙h6 ♙f6 14 ♗c5 ♖e8 15 ♗xc6 ♙d7 16 dxc7 ♙xc6 17 cxd8 ♗ ♖axd8 Black's development advantage balances the two-pawn deficit. With this in mind, White should prefer 12 ♙h6!, preventing Black castling kingside. In the game M.Schlosser-Keitlinghaus, Münster 1992 White kept the advantage after 12...♙e6 13 ♘d2 c5 14 ♗a4+ ♗d7 15 ♗a6 c6 16 ♖ad1 ♗c7 17 b3 ♗b6 18 ♗e2 0-0-0 19 ♘f3 ♖he8 20 ♘g5 ♖d7 21 ♘xf7!.

9 ♘c3 0-0

Black can start his knight manoeuvre straight away with 9...♘c5 (threatening ...♙a6), when White should answer 10 ♘d4 0-0 (but not 10...♙a6? 11 ♗g4! ♙xf1 12 ♗xg7 ♖f8 13 ♘xf1, when Black has won the exchange but his position is a complete mess) 11 ♖d1 (11 ♖e1 is also possible; after 11...♙e6 we reach the note to White's 11th move) 11...♗e8 12 ♘f5 f6 13 ♗g4 ♙e6 14 ♙h6, with the initiative, Vasiukov-Knežević, Leningrad 1991.

10 ♖e1 ♘c5 (D)

10...♙e8 is inferior. After 11 ♗c4 ♘c5 12 ♘g5! ♙xg5 13 ♙xg5 ♗xg5 14 ♗xc5 Black will find it hard to break White's grip on the dark squares.



11 ♙e3

White continues to develop classically, centralizing his pieces. Another good choice here is 11 ♘d4 ♙e6 12 ♙e3 and now:

a) 12...♘xd4 13 ♙xd4 c5 14 ♙e3 d5 15 exd6 ♙xd6 16 ♙e4 ♙b7 (or 16...♙xh2+ 17 ♘xh2 ♗h4+ 18 ♘g1 ♗xe4 19 ♙xc5 ♗xc2 20 ♖xe2 ♖d8 21 ♖e7 with a very good ending for White) 17 ♘xd6 cxd6 18 ♖ad1 ♗f6 19 f3 ♖ae8 20 ♗d2 ♖e6 21 ♙f2 and Black's weak d6-pawn promises a small edge for White, Tseshkovsky-Ivkov, Bled/Portorož 1979.

b) 12...♖b8 13 ♘b3! a6 14 f4 f5 15 exf6 ♖xf6 16 ♙e4 ♖f7 17 ♖f1 d6 18 f5 ♘f8 19 ♘d4 and White's pieces are ready for a kingside assault, Niermann-Fecke, Germany 1994.

11...♙e6 12 ♖ad1 d5

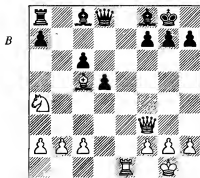
Similar play arises after 12...♖b8 13 b3 ♙b4 14 ♙d2 d5 15 exd6 cxd6 16 ♙e4!, when White maintains a grip on the centre. Jansa-Knežević, Namestovo 1987 continued 16...♙xd2 17 ♗xd2 d5 18 ♗c3! ♗b6?! (Black should prefer 18...♗c7, allowing White

a bind on the dark squares after 19 dxc5 19 d6! c7 20 d5 b7 (the alternative 20... e8? loses brilliantly to 21 xd5! cxd5 22 xe6!) 21 e5! fe8 22 d6! d8 23 xf7 and White won.

13 exd6 cxd6 14 d4 dxd4

Following 14... d7 15 d5 d5 16 xc7+ xc7 17 d2 h4 18 c2 fe8 19 b3 White keeps a slight advantage, Karpov-Korchnoi, Merano Wch (2) 1981.

15 xd4 e8 16 f3 d5 17 a4 f8 18 c5! xe1+ 19 xe1 (D)



The general assessment is that White's dark-square control gives him an edge. The position has simplified somewhat, but there are still several tactics lurking in the background. On first inspection it looks like 19... a5 wins a piece, but after 20 b4! xa4 21 e8 b7 22 e2! White wins the piece back due to back-rank threats, e.g. 22... xa2 23 h3 h6 24 xa8 xa8 25 e8 b7 26 xf8+ h7 27 xf7 a1+ 28 h2 and the a-pawn drops as well. 19... d7 20 xf8 xf8

21 c3 is also good for White, while Tal-Portisch, Brussels World Cup 1988 continued 19... g4!? 20 xcg4 (20 c3!?) 20... a5 21 c3 xc5 22 xc5 xc5 23 d7 f8 24 h4 h5 and here 25 e8! g6 26 e7 xe7 27 xe7 b8 28 b3 keeps White's lasting advantage into a rook and pawn ending!

B)

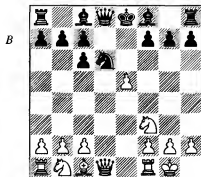
5... d6 6 xc6

Once more White has alternatives such as 6 dxc5 and 6 g5 , but the main line promises most chance of an advantage.

6... dxc6

6... bxc6 makes no sense here. After 7 dxc5 b7 8 d3 c5 9 d4 White is already in a good position. Sion Castro-Campora, Leon 1997 continued 9... e6 10 dxe6 fxe6 11 h5+ g6 12 g4 d5 13 exd6 cxd6 14 c4 d7 15 e4 e7 16 d4 and Black was in big trouble.

7 dxc5 (D)



Now Black has two possibilities:

B1: 7...♖e4!? 41

B2: 7...♖f5 42

B1)

7...♖e4!?

Very rarely seen, but although this is risky, there is no obvious refutation.

8 ♖e2

Attacking the knight is the best way. Going into the endgame with 8 ♖xd8+ ♔xd8 is no longer so appealing for White. The knight is better placed on e4 as it doesn't block the light-squared bishop.

8...♗f5

More of a test than 8...♖c5, which allows White to obtain an easy advantage after 9 ♔d1 ♗d7 10 ♖c3 ♗e7 11 ♗e3.

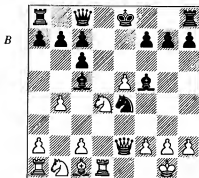
9 ♔d1 ♖c8

Given the strength of White's 11th move in the main line, Black could well take a further look at 9...♖e7. It looks rather ugly to block in the f8-bishop, but White must react quickly. If Black were able to complete his development he would have no problems at all. In Jansa-Sahu, Wrexham 1997, White played energetically with 10 ♗e3 ♔d8 11 ♖a3!? ♔xd1+ 12 ♔xd1 and after 12...♖c3? 13 bxc3 ♖xa3 14 ♖d4 ♗c8 15 e6! he was able to crash through the black defences. If 12...g6 White should grab the pawn with 13 ♗xa7, as 13...b6 14 ♖d4 looks good. Perhaps Black should be content with 12...a6!?

10 ♖d4 ♗c5 11 b4! (D)

A significant move, which takes away the c5-square from Black. This becomes important when White tries

to trap the knight. A quieter way to play would be 11 ♗e3, although after 11...0-0 12 f3 ♗xd4 13 ♗xd4 ♖g5 14 ♖c3 ♔e8 15 ♔d2 ♖e6 Black had equalized in Cu.Hansen-Westerinen, Nordic Ch (Reykjavik) 1997.



11...♗b6

Capturing with 11...♗xb4 runs into 12 e6!, when Black is forced to give up material, e.g. 12...fxe6 13 ♖xf5 exf5 14 f3. Sulskis-Westerinen, Gausdal 1995 went 12...♗g6 13 exf7+ ♔f8 (13...♔xf7 14 ♖c4+ ♔f6 15 f3 wins) 14 ♖c4 ♗d6 15 ♖e6+ ♔e7 16 f8♗+ ♔xf8 17 ♖xf8 ♔xf8 18 f3 ♖f6 19 ♗a3 and White's material advantage paid off in the end.

After the text-move, the knight has no squares to go to from e4, but can White actually win it? It's not as easy as it looks!

12 c4

12 f3 allows Black to escape after 12...♖d7 13 ♗b2 ♖g5 14 c4 ♗xd4+ 15 ♗xd4 0-0-0 16 ♖c3 ♖e6 with an equal position, Wahls-Ekström, Dresden Z 1998. However, 12 ♗e3!? looks

worth a try, e.g. 12...♙xd4 (12...a5 13 f3 ♗xd4 14 ♞xd4 c5 15 ♞c4! b5 16 ♞xe4 ♗xe4 17 fxe4 cxb4 18 ♞xb5+ c6 19 ♞c5 looks very good for White, but perhaps the calm 12...h6, preparing ...♗g5, is Black's best idea) 13 ♞xd4 c5 (once more, 13...h6 should be considered) 14 ♞d1! cxb4 15 ♞b5+ c6 16 ♞xb4 h6 17 ♗d2 ♗xd2 18 ♞xd2 and Black's king is stuck in the centre.

12...c5 13 ♗xf5 ♞xf5 14 b5

14 ♞f3?! ♞xe5 15 ♗b2 ♞xb2 16 ♞xe4+ ♗f8 is good for Black.

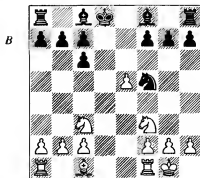
14...♗a5 15 f3 ♗c3 16 ♗xc3 ♗xc3 17 ♗b2 ♗xb2 18 ♞xb2 0-0 19 ♞d5

We are following Rõtšagov-Sammalvuo, Finnish Cht 1996/7. White's better pawn-structure gives him a small edge.

B2)

7...♗f5 8 ♞xd8+ ♗xd8 9 ♗c3 (D)

Also possible are moves such as 9 b3, 9 h3 and 9 ♞d1+, but the text-move is considered to be the most flexible.



Black now has a number of development plans:

B21: 9...♗e7 42

B22: 9...♗e6 43

B23: 9...h6 44

B24: 9...♗e8 44

Yet another idea is 9...a5!?, immediately trying to gain space on the queenside. This can often transpose to other lines. Against such a non-developing move it makes sense to play as actively as possible, for example 10 ♗e4 h6 11 h3 ♗e6 12 g4 ♗d5 13 ♗ed2 ♗e7 14 c4 ♗e6 15 ♗d4 ♗d7 16 ♗e4 ♗g6 17 f4 h5 18 ♗g5 ♗c5 19 ♗c3 ♗e8 20 ♞ael hxg4 21 e6! and White's initiative told in Blehm-Karpatchev, Cappelle la Grande 1998.

B21)

9...♗e7

A relatively new plan for Black. The knight is ready to hop to g6, where it pressures the e5-pawn.

10 ♗d4!?

A logical move, which paves the way for the advance of the f-pawn. After the slower 10 h3 Black can play 10...♗e8, transposing to Line B24. Ivanchuk-Shirov, Monaco Amber blindfold 1998 went instead 10...♗g6 11 ♗g5+ ♗e8 12 ♞ad1 ♗e6 13 ♗d4 ♗b4 14 ♗xe6 fxe6 15 ♗e4 ♗xe5 16 ♗f4 ♗f7 17 ♗xc7 and White was slightly better due to the weakness on e6.

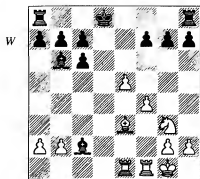
10...♗g6 11 f4 ♗c5 12 ♗e3 ♗b6 13 ♞ael ♗h4 14 ♗e4

After 14 e6, Shirov-Z. Almasi, Tilburg 1996 continued 14...fxe6? 15 ♗xe6+ ♗xc6 16 ♗xb6 axb6 17 ♞xe6 ♗d7 18 ♞fe1 ♞ae8 19 ♞xe8 ♞xe8 20

Hxe8 Qe8 21 Qf2 and White, with a superior pawn majority, went on to win the endgame. In his notes to the game, however, Shirov pointed out that Black can instead play 14...c5! 15 Qb3 Qxe6 16 Qxc5 Qxc5 17 Qxc5 Qc4 , when White has nothing.

The text-move is Shirov's suggested improvement.

14... Qf5 15 Qxf5 Qxf5 16 Qg3 Qxc2 (D)



Shirov comments that after 17 Hf2 Qxe3 18 Hxe3 White has good play for the pawn. Perhaps it's even stronger to capture on b6 first. Following 17 Qxb6 axb6 18 Hf2 Qa4 19 Hd2+ Qc8 20 b3 Qb5 21 Qf5 g6 22 Qh6 White has a strong initiative. Further tests are needed in this line.

B22)

9... Qe6

Sensible development, but this allows White to harass the bishop.

10 Hd1+!

Stronger than the immediate 10 Qg5 , which can be answered by the

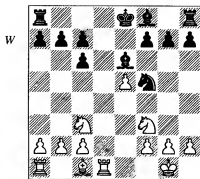
unorthodox but effective 10... Qe7! . Black is ready to recapture on e6 with the king, where it keeps an eye on the e5-pawn, and there is no way to exploit the king's position on e7.

10... Qe8 (D)

10... Qc8 is also answered by 11 Qg5 . Then:

a) 11... Qc4 12 b3 Qb4 13 Qb2 Qxc3 14 Qxc3 Qd5 15 Qh3 h5 16 Qf4 Qe6 17 Hd3 b6 18 Qd2! Qb7 19 Qxe6 fxe6 20 Qg5 and White's domination of the d-file guarantees him a large advantage, Dvoiry-Aleksandrov, Moscow 1996.

b) 11... Qc5 12 Qce4 Qb6 13 Qxe6 fxe6 14 Qf1 Hf8 15 a4! a5 16 Ha3 Qb8 17 Hd7 Qa7 18 Hd3 and once again Black is very tied up, Gdanski-Gretarsson, Stockholm 1997.



11 Qg5 Qe7

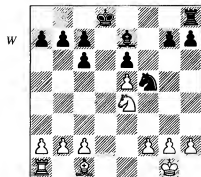
11... Qc4 gives White too many open lines after 12 b3 Qb4 13 bxc4! Qxc3 14 Hb1 b6 15 g4 Qh4 16 f4.

12 Qxe6 fxe6 13 Qe4 Hd8

Better than 13... Qf7?! 14 g4 Qh4 15 Hd7! Qf3+ 16 Qg2 Qxe5 17 Hxc7

and the white rook causes Black problems on the seventh rank, Benjamin-Sherzer, New York 1994.

14 fxd8+ fxd8 (D)



We are following J.Polgar-Smyslov, Monaco 1994. White has a small but unmistakable edge. Perhaps the most active way to continue would be 15 g5 g5 16 fxg5 e7 17 d1 c5 18 c3 .

B23)

9...h6

Preparing ... e6 , without having to worry about g5 .

10 h3

White aims for g4 .

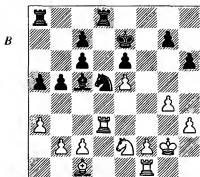
10... e8

10...a5 11 a4!? e6 12 g4 e7 13 d4 g5 14 f4 gxf4 15 fxe6+ fxe6 16 xf4 led to a small advantage for White in Djurhuus-Dumitrache, Haifa Echt 1989, while 10... e6 11 g4 e7 12 d4 c5 13 fxe6+ fxe6 14 f4 c6 15 e3 b6 16 d4 e7 17 g2 is also pleasant for White, Campora-Rubineti, Argentine Ch 1989.

11 $\text{f4!?$

This bishop can drop back on the kingside and help to organize a pawn assault.

11... e6 12 g4 e7 13 d4 d5 14 fxe6 fxe6 15 e2 c5 16 ad1 e7 17 c1 hd8 18 a3 b5 19 g2 a5 20 d3 (D)



Wahls-Smejkal, Bundesliga 1997/8. White has eliminated one of the black bishops and his superior pawn-structure guarantees an edge.

B24)

9... e8

The most popular move. Black moves his king to a less vulnerable square, and waits to see White's intentions before committing himself. Here we will discuss two options for White:

B241: 10 b3 44

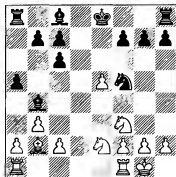
B242: 10 h3 45

B241)

10 b3 a5 11 b2 b4 12 e2 (D)

The other major move here is 12 e4 . After 12...a4 13 a3 e7 14 b4

♙e6 15 ♖fe1, Onishchuk-Miles, Biel 1996 continued 15...h6?! 16 h3 ♜d8 17 ♜ad1 ♜d7 18 ♜xd7 ♗xd7 19 g4 ♗h4 20 ♗xh4 ♙xh4 21 ♖c5+ ♗c8 22 ♗xe6 fxe6 23 ♜e4 ♜d8 24 ♙d4 b6 25 ♗f1 ♜f8 26 ♗e2 and White went on to win. In a later game Miles improved on his play with 15...♜d8! 16 ♜ad1 b6 17 h3 h5! (the point – Black hasn't wasted a move with ...h6) 18 ♜xd8+ ♗xd8 19 ♙c1 ♙d5 20 ♙g5 ♙xg5 21 ♗exg5 ♜e8 and the powerful bishop on d5 meant that Black was fine in Sedina-Miles, Toscolano 1996.



12...a4 13 c4

Playing to restrict the light-squared bishop, which cannot find a home on d5.

13...h5

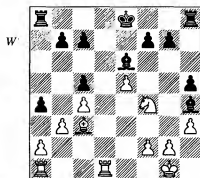
13...♙c5 14 ♗d2 h5 15 ♗e4 ♙e7 16 ♗f4 b6 17 ♖fe1 ♙e6 18 ♙c3 gave White a small plus in Jansa-Plachetka, Ostrava 1992.

14 ♙c3 ♙e7 15 ♜fd1 c5 16 ♗f4 ♙e6 17 h3 ♗h4

After the game Miles suggested 17...axb3 18 axb3 ♜xa1 19 ♜xa1 ♗d7

as an improvement for Black, but following 20 ♗f1 ♗c6 21 ♗e2, White still has a minute plus.

18 ♗xh4 ♙xh4 (D)



Now Emms-Miles, British League (4NCL) 1997/8 continued 19 ♗xe6 fxe6 20 g3 ♙e7 21 ♗g2 ♗f7 and was soon drawn. A better try for White would be 19 ♗d5!?, e.g. 19...♙d8 20 f4 g6 21 ♗f2 and White still enjoys any advantage that's going.

B242)

10 h3 a5

Other moves include:

a) 10...♙e6 11 g4 ♗e7 12 ♗g5 ♙c4 13 ♜e1 ♗d5 14 ♗d1! h6 15 ♗e4 ♗b4 16 ♗e3 ♙d5 17 ♗g3 ♙e6 18 a3 ♗d5 19 ♗g2! a6 20 f4 ♙c5+ 21 ♗h2 h5 (de Firmian-Miles, Biel 1990) and now 22 ♗e4 ♙e7 23 ♗g3 keeps the advantage.

b) 10...♗e7!? (this possibility is becoming more popular) 11 ♜e1 ♗g6 (11...♗d5!? 12 ♗e4 ♗b4 13 ♜e2 ♙f5 14 ♗d4 ♙xe4 15 ♜xe4 c5 16 a3 cxd4 17 axb4 ♙xb4 18 ♜xd4 ♙e7 19 ♙e3

a6 led to a draw in Topalov-Kramnik, Wijk aan Zee 1999) 12 Qe4 h6 (the alternative 12... Qe7 13 Qd6+! cxd6 14 exd6 f6 15 dxe7 Qxe7 16 b3 Qf7 17 Qa3 Qe8 18 Qd2 is slightly awkward for Black) 13 Qd4 c5 14 Qb5 Qd7 15 f4 Qc6! 16 a4 Qe7 with an unclear position, Brodsky-Van den Doel, Wijk aan Zee 1999.

11 $\text{Qf4!?$ Qe6

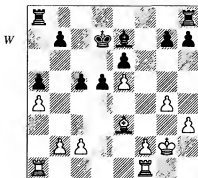
11... Qb4 12 Qe4 Qe6 13 c3 Qf8 14 Qfe1 h5 15 Qeg5 Qd5 16 e6! f6 17 Qf7 Qh7 18 Qxc7 was good for White in Lutz-Korchnoi, Dresden Z 1998, as 18... Qxe6 fails to 19 Qd8! , but Black managed to equalize in Bologan-Aleksandrov, Kishinev 1998 after 11...a4!? 12 a3 Qe7 13 Qad1 Qh4 14 Qd4 Qf5 15 Qde2 h5 16 Qe4 h4.

12 g4 Qe7 13 Qg5 Qd5

The most prudent course of action. Maintaining the bishop with 13... Qc4 can run into a swift attack down the e-file, e.g. 14 Qfe1 Qg6 15 Qg3 Qb4 16 e6! f6 17 Qf7 Qg8 18 Qxc7 Qh4 19

Qe3 Qxc3 20 bxc3 Qd5 21 Qd1 b5 22 Qg3 Qg6 23 c4 bxc4 24 Qb1 Qe5 25 Qb7 and Black was forced to resign in Luther-Mainka, Bad Zwosten 1999.

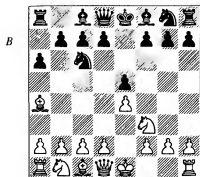
14 Qxe6 fxe6 15 Qd2 Qb4 16 Qxd5 cxd5 17 Qe3 Qd7 18 a4 Qe7 19 Qg2 c5 (D)



Galkin-Aleksandrov, Russia Cup (Krasnodar) 1997. This endgame is reasonably level, although the pawn majorities mean that there is still plenty to fight for.

5 The Deferred Steinitz and Other Fourth Move Alternatives

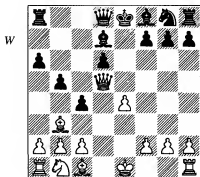
1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♝c6 3 ♚b5 a6 4 ♚a4
(D)



In this chapter we will look at Black's fourth move alternatives to 4...♝f6, including the Delayed Schlie-mann (4...f5), the Norwegian Variation (4...b5 5 ♚b3 ♝a5) and, most importantly, the Steinitz Defence Deferred (4...d6).

The last of these options is basi-cally an improved version of the Steinitz Defence. One of the reasons for this is that Black is ready at any moment to escape the pin on the a4-e8 diagonal with a timely ...b5. This can be seen to the full effect if White tries

to follow the same recipe as against the Steinitz Defence. After 5 d4 b5! 6 ♚b3 ♝xd4 7 ♝xd4 exd4 the natural 8 ♜xd4? is a mistake which falls into what's known as the 'Noah's Ark Trap'. After 8...c5! White cannot avoid a loss of material, e.g. 9 ♜d5 ♚c6 10 ♜c6+ ♚d7 11 ♜d5 c4! (D) and the Lopez bishop is cruelly trapped!

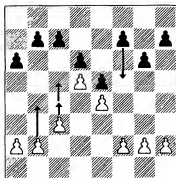


White has a few different choices against the Steinitz Deferred, includ-ing 5 0-0, 5 c4 and 5 ♚xc6+, but I'm recommending the most popular move, 5 c3, which immediately goes about setting up a pawn-centre with d4. Black can then choose to play

adventurously with the risky 5...f5, which leads to sharp play reminiscent of the Schliemann Defence. It's more usual, however, for Black to support the e5-pawn, either with ...g6-g7, or ...g6 and ...g7. Play in these lines is much slower and of a positional nature. Black's position is usually very solid, if slightly cramped.

White Plays d4-d5

In many variations of the Steinitz Deferred, White has the option of maintaining the tension in the centre or pushing with d4-d5, reaching this type of closed position.



The strategy then become very similar to lines of the King's Indian Defence. White may seek to attack on the queenside by trying to enforce the c4-c5 advance, while Black will play in a similar way on the other side with ...f5. One major difference from the King's Indian is that the light-squared bishops are normally exchanged quite early after d4-d5. This difference usually favours White, as the pawn-structure

dictates that White has swapped off his traditionally 'bad' bishop, while Black no longer has his 'good' bishop.

The Theory of Black's 4th Move Alternatives

1 e4 e5 2 f3 c6 3 b5 a6 4 a4

We will now consider three main continuations:

A:	4...f5	49
B:	4...b5	49
C:	4...d6	50

Other moves include:

a) 4...g6 5 d4 exd4 6 Qxd4 (White can also play as against 3...g6 with 6 g5, e.g. 6...e7 7 xe7 gxe7 8 Qxd4) 6...g7 7 Qxc6 bxc6 8 0-0 Qe7 9 f4 f5 and here Tal recommends 10 e5 0-0 11 We2 with advantage.

b) 4...g7 5 c3 b5 (for 5...d6 6 d4 Qd7 see Line C) 6 b3 d5 7 d4! exd4 8 exd5 Qxd5 9 0-0 e6 10 g5 e7 11 xe7 Wxc7 12 e1 Wd6 13 Qbd2 0-0 14 Qe4 Wf4 15 Qc5 Wd6 16 Qxe6 fxe6 17 Qg5! and White has a dangerous attack, Kurajica-Klarić, Yugoslavia 1978.

c) 4...c5 isn't bad. After 5 c3 Qf6 6 d4 (it should also be mentioned that 6 0-0 transposes to Chapter 6) 6...b6 7 0-0 0-0 8 g5 h6 9 h4 d6 we reach a position similar to one discussed in Chapter 3, Line C, except for the insertion of ...a6 and a4. After 10 Qxc6 bxc6 11 dxe5 dxe5 White can choose between the relatively quiet 12 Qbd2 and 12 Wxd8 Qxd8 13 Qxe5 g5 14 g3 Qxe4 15 Qxc6, when Black

no longer has 15...♙a6, but even so after 15...♞e8 there is compensation for the pawn.

A)
4...f5

This delayed Schliemann has never really caught on. 4 d4 against the normal Schliemann is not effective, as after 4...fxe4 5 ♖xe5 ♜xe5 6 dxe5 c6 Black attacks the bishop and threatens ...♞a5+, picking up the e5-pawn. Here, however, White's bishop is less exposed on a4 so...

5 d4! exd4

Now 5...fxe4 6 ♖xe5 is quite favourable to White.

6 e5! ♙b4+

6...♙c5 7 0-0 ♜ge7 8 c3 dxc3 9 ♖xc3 d5 10 ♙g5! leaves Black struggling to complete his development. 10...♙e6 11 ♞c1 h6 12 ♙xe7 ♙xe7 13 ♖d4 ♜f7 14 ♖xe6 ♜xe6 15 ♖xd5! led to a winning position in Mortensen-Lilja, Copenhagen 1998, while 10...♜f8 11 ♞c1 ♙a7 12 ♙xc6 bxc6 13 ♖e2 c5 14 ♖f4 c6 15 e6 left Black with an extremely grim position in W.Watson-Nunn, London 1984.

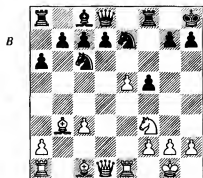
7 c3! dxc3 8 ♖xc3 ♜ge7 9 0-0 ♙xc3

Alternatives do not ease Black's problems:

a) 9...d5 10 ♖e2 ♙e6 11 ♖f4 ♞d7 12 ♜g5 ♙g8 13 ♞h5+ g6 14 ♞h6 and White simply threatens ♞g7 followed by ♞xh8!.

b) 9...0-0 10 ♖e2! d6 11 a3 ♙c5 12 b4 ♙b6 13 ♙b3+ ♜h8 14 exd6! ♞xd6 15 ♞xd6 cxd6 16 ♞d1 ♙c7 17 ♖f4!, followed by ♜g5.

10 bxc3 0-0 11 ♙b3+ ♜h8 12 ♞e1!
(D)



Lobron-Bialas, Bundesliga 1986/7. A pawn is a small price to pay for such a position. In particular, White's bishops are ready to cause havoc on the open board.

B)
4...b5 5 ♙b3 ♖a5

This is the so-called Norwegian Variation, Black's most direct attempt to hunt down the Lopez bishop. Other moves:

a) 5...♙c5 6 c3! and now:

a1) 6...♖f6 7 d4 exd4 (7...♙b6 8 dxe5 wins for White after 8...♜g4 9 ♙xf7+! or 8...♖xe4 9 ♞d5) 8 cxd4 ♙b4+ 9 ♙d2 ♙xd2+ 10 ♖bxd2 d5 11 e5 and White's centre gives him a clear advantage. This position can be compared to one arising from the Giuoco Piano after 1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♖c6 3 ♙c4 ♙c5 4 c3 ♖f6 5 d4 exd4 6 cxd4 ♙b4+ 7 ♙d2 ♙xd2+ 8 ♖bxd2 d5!, when Black succeeds in breaking up the white centre. Here the position of

the white bishop (b3 instead of c4) makes all the difference.

a2) 6...d6 7 d4 exd4 8 cxd4 ♖b6 9 h3!, preventing ...♗g4 and securing the centre.

b) 5...♗f6 is not a bad transpositional move. 6 ♗g5 looks tempting, but 6...d5! 7 exd5 ♗d4 is fine for Black. Therefore White should simply play 6 0-0, transposing to Chapter 6.

6 0-0 d6

6...♗xb3 7 axb3 d6 8 d4 transposes to the main line of this section.

7 d4 ♗xb3

7...f6 8 ♗c3 ♗xb3 9 axb3 reaches the same position. Black's only other try is 7...exd4. After 8 ♗xd4 ♖b7 (8...♗e7 9 ♗g5! f6 10 ♗c3 ♗xb3 11 axb3 leaves White with the advantage; the e6-square is quite vulnerable) 9 ♗d2! (White has to play carefully; 9 ♗c3?? loses a piece to 9...c5 10 ♗f5 c4) and now:

a) 9...c5 10 ♗d5 ♗xd5 11 exd5 cxd4 12 ♖e1+! (the point of 9 ♗d2) 12...♖e7 13 ♗xa5 ♖xe1 14 ♖xe1+ and White has regained his piece, leaving Black with a wrecked pawn-structure.

b) 9...♗xb3 is better, but after 10 ♗xb3 ♗f6 11 ♖e1 ♗e7 12 ♗a5! ♖b8 13 ♗xb7 ♖xb7 14 ♖f3 ♖c8 15 ♗c3 c6 16 ♗e2 0-0 17 ♗d4 White still has a small plus, Smagin-Kupreichik, USSR Ch 1985.

8 axb3 f6 9 ♗c3 ♖b7 10 ♗h4 ♖d7

After 10...♗e7 11 dxe5! dxe5 (or 11...fxe5 12 f4!) 12 ♖f3 ♖d7 13 ♖d1 ♖e6 14 ♗d5 ♗xd5 15 exd5 ♖f7 (Anand-Agdestein, Baguio City jr Wch 1987), Anand suggests 16 ♗f5!

as a way of maintaining the advantage.

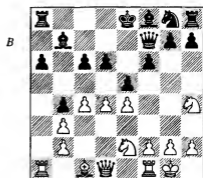
11 ♗d5 ♖f7

11...♗e7 12 ♖h5+ forces the king to move, as 12...g6 loses to 13 ♗xg6 hxg6 14 ♗xf6+ ♗f7 15 ♖xh8. After 11...g6 I like 12 f4!, opening up the position. Then 12...exf4 13 ♗xf4 g5? fails to 14 ♖h5+ ♗d8 15 ♗xg5!.

12 c4 e6 13 ♗c3!

Anand's suggested improvement over 13 ♗e3, which allowed Black to equalize after 13...♗e7 14 d5 cxd5 15 cxd5 g6 in Anand-Timman, Linares 1993.

13...b4 14 ♗e2 (D)



White's space advantage outweighs the latent power of the bishop-pair.

C)

4...d6 5 c3

Now Black can try:

C1: 5...f5 51

C2: 5...♗d7 52

The former is ambitious, while the latter is solid. Other continuations are

less important, but should be mentioned:

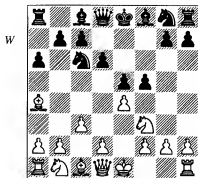
a) 5...♟f6 6 d4 b5 7 ♙c2 ♟g4 8 ♟e3 ♟e7 9 0-0 0-0 10 h3 ♟h5 11 ♟bd2 is better for White, who will continue with ♟e1, ♟f1 and ♟g3, harassing the bishop.

b) 5...♟g4 6 h3 ♟h5 7 d4 b5 8 ♙c2 ♟f6 9 ♟e3 ♟e7 10 0-0 0-0 11 ♟bd2 reaches line 'a'.

c) 5...g6 is a reasonable move. After 6 d4 ♟d7 we have transposed to Line C22.

C1)

5...f5 (D)



6 exf5 ♟xf5 7 0-0 ♟d3

The key move in Black's plans. Black must stop White playing an early d4, since otherwise White's quicker development and Black's weaknesses would soon tell. White must now spend some time extracting this annoying bishop.

8 ♟e1 ♟e7

It's imperative to block the e-file. No one plays 8...♟f6 here, and I think

it must be because of the unpleasant 9 ♟d4! ♟d7 10 ♟f3, when Black's position is on the point of collapse.

9 ♙c2!

The most sensible approach, and the one favoured by theory. The bishop is eliminated and White can complete his development. The more ambitious 9 ♟e3 leads to very unclear consequences after 9...e4 10 ♟e1 ♟g5 11 ♟xd3!? ♟xe3 12 ♟b4 ♟xf2+! 13 ♟xf2 ♟h4+ 14 ♟g1 ♟h6, when White has to be very careful, e.g. 15 ♟f1? ♟g4 16 ♟f4 ♟f8 17 ♟g3 ♟f1+!! 18 ♟xf1 ♟xh2+ 19 ♟xh2 ♟xh2 0-1 Adams-Piket, Wijk aan Zee 1991.

9...♟xc2 10 ♟xc2 ♟f6 11 d4 0-0

Other moves include:

a) 11...exd4 12 cxd4 0-0 13 ♟c3 ♟h8 14 ♟g5! ♟xd4 15 ♟d3 h6 16 ♟xd4 hxg5 17 ♟xg5 ♟d7 18 ♟e2!, planning ♟f4, leaves White with an unquestionable advantage.

b) 11...e4 12 ♟g5 d5 13 f3 h6 14 ♟h3 0-0 (14...exf3? 15 ♟g6+ is very strong) 15 ♟d2 exf3 16 ♟xf3 ♟d7 (16...♟d6 17 ♟xh6! gxh6 18 ♟g6+ ♟h8 19 ♟xh6+ ♟h7 20 ♟fg5 ♟d7 21 ♟e6 ♟ae8 22 ♟ae1 ♟xe6 23 ♟xe6 ♟g8 24 ♟xh7 ♟xh7 25 ♟f6+ ♟g7 26 ♟h4+ ♟h7 27 ♟h6 1-0 A.Sokolov-Anić, French Cht 1994) 17 ♟g6! ♟g4 18 ♟xg4 ♟xg4 19 ♟f4 ♟fd8 20 ♟e6 ♟d7 21 ♟f4 ♟c8 22 ♟e2! and White's initiative persists, Leko-Yusupov, Vienna 1996.

12 d5! e4

The best move. 12...♟xd5 fails to 13 ♟b3, while 12...♟b8? 13 ♟g5 ♟c8 14 c4 is obviously bad for Black.

13 ♟g5 ♟e5 14 ♟e6 ♟d7 15 ♟d2!

Black's idea was 15 dxf8?! Wg4! with dangerous counterplay, e.g. 16 d6? d3+ 17 cf1 Wxg2+! .

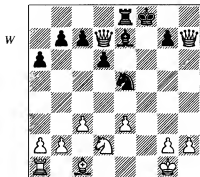
15...e3

Anand gives 15... d3 16 Exe4! dxe4 17 dxe4 dxc1 18 dxf8 Exf8 19 Exc1 , when White is a clear pawn up, while 15... Efc8 16 dxe4 dxd5 17 d4g5 dxcg5 18 dxcg5 is slightly better for White, according to Yusupov.

16 Exe3 dxd5 17 dxf8 dxe3 18 Wxh7+ cxf8 19 fxe3

Grabbing material with 19 Wh8+ cf7 20 Wxa8 once again grants Black serious play after 20... dxcg2! .

19...Ee8 (D)

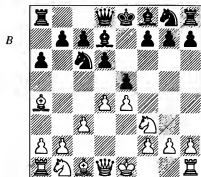


In Anand-Yusupov, Wijk aan Zee FIDE Ct (5) 1994, White played 20 e4 and after 20...d5? 21 d3! Black was already facing big problems with his airy king. However, 20... d6! is a tougher nut to crack, e.g. 21 Wh8+ cf7 22 Wh5+ cg8 23 d3 d7 24 d2 Wa4 and Black has consolidated and is ready to pluck off White's weak e4-pawn. In the later game Almasi-Winants, Wijk aan Zee 1995, White

improved with 20 d4! and following 20... Wg4 (20...d5 21 d3! d6 22 d2 d4 runs into the intermezzo 23 Efl!) 21 d2 d3+ 22 ch1 dxd2 23 dxd2 White was still in control.

C2)

5...d7 6 d4 (D)



Here Black can play:

C21: 6... d6 52

C22: 6...g6 53

6... d6 is inferior. After 7 0-0 d6 8 d5 dce7 9 c4 d6 10 d3 White has a space advantage and Black's pieces are tangled up on the kingside, Ivkov-Kolarov, Moscow OL 1956.

C21)

6...d6 7 d3

This move is more flexible than 7 0-0, although White can still count on an edge after 7... d6 8 d5 d8 9 c4 d6 10 d3 0-0 11 d7 dxd7 12 Wc2 d4 13 dxd4 d4 14 b4 d6 15 b1 dxc1 16 Efxc1 , Van der Wiel-Short, Amsterdam 1991.

7...♖g6

In Anand-Yusupov, Wijk aan Zee FIDE Ct (3) 1994, Black tried 7...h6 but failed to equalize after 8 ♖bd2 g5 (8...♗g6! may be worth a look) 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 h4 g4 11 ♖h2 h5 12 ♖hf1 ♗g6 13 g3 ♙e7 14 ♙c2 ♙e6 15 ♙b3 ♗d7 16 ♙xe6 ♗xe6 17 ♗b3. In the endgame Black's pawn moves on the kingside will leave serious weaknesses.

8 h4!

This is a very useful restricting move. The white pawns aim to restrain the black pieces.

8...h5

Other moves for Black include:

a) 8...♙e7 9 g3! h6 10 d5 ♖b8 11 ♙c2 ♙g4 12 ♖bd2 ♗d7 13 ♗f1 ♗f6 14 ♖1h2 ♙d7 15 ♗d2 h5 16 a4 and White has achieved a healthy space advantage, while Black has no immediate pawn-break, Milos-Magomedov, Moscow OL 1994.

b) 8...♙g4 9 ♙xc6+ bxc6 10 ♖bd2 ♙e7 11 ♗a4!, attacking the vulnerable c6-pawn. Stefansson-Gretarsson, Icelandic Ch 1996 continued 11...exd4 12 cxd4 ♙xh4 13 ♖xh4 ♖xh4 and now White played the spectacular 14 ♗xh4! ♗xh4 15 ♗xc6+ ♗e7 16 ♗xc7+ ♙d7 17 ♗c4!! ♗h1+ 18 ♗d2 ♗xa1 19 ♗xd6+ ♗e8 20 ♙g5 f6 21 ♙xf6! gxf6 22 ♗xf6 ♙b5 23 ♗xh8+ ♗e7 24 ♗xh7+ ♗d8 25 ♗g8+ ♗c7 26 ♗xa8 ♙xc4 27 ♗a7+, when the extra pawns proved too strong for the bishop.

9 g3

Dolmatov also proposes 9 ♗g5 ♙e7 10 ♙b3 as a simple way to achieve the advantage.

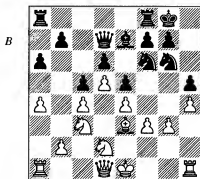
9...♙e7 10 d5 ♖b8 11 ♙xd7+ ♖xd7

Reaching a typical blocked position where the exchange of light-squared bishops has favoured White. Another factor in White's favour is that the knight on g6 is out of play.

12 ♗fd2 ♗f6 13 f3 0-0 14 c4 c5

Preventing the standard attacking scheme of ♖c3, b4, ♖b3 and c5.

15 ♖c3 ♗d7 16 a4 (D)



Topalov-Yusupov, Novgorod 1995. White has more space and can play on both sides of the board.

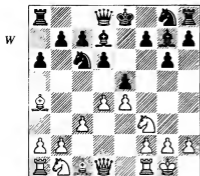
C22)

6...♗g7 0-0 ♙g7 (D)

8 ♖e1

This is by no means the only move:

a) 8 d5 ♖ce7 9 ♙xd7+ ♗xd7 10 c4 h6 11 ♖c3 f5 12 exf5 gxf5 (12...♖xf5 13 ♖e4 ♖f6 14 ♖xf6+ ♙xf6 15 ♗d2 0-0 16 ♖e4 and the knight perches very nicely on e4, Short-Spassky, London 1986) 13 ♖h4 ♙f6! (earlier only 13...♖f6 had been played, but 14 f4 e4 15 ♙e3 0-0 16 h3 c5 17 dxc6



bxc6 18 ♖e2 leads to a pleasant position for White, Fischer-Filip, Curaçao Ct 1962) 14 f4 e4 15 ♙e3 ♙xh4 16 ♜h5+ ♜g6 17 ♜xg6+ ♜f7 18 ♜xf7+ ♜xf7 and Black has equalized, Ye Jiangchuan-Azmaiparashvili, Erevan OL 1996.

b) 8 ♙e3!? ♜f6 (or 8...♜ge7 9 d5 ♜b8 10 c4 0-0 11 ♜c3 with a slight advantage for White) 9 ♜bd2 0-0 10 dxe5 ♜xe5 11 ♜xe5 dxe5 12 f3 ♙xa4 13 ♜xa4 ♜d3 14 ♜fe1 ♜fd8 15 ♜b3 ♜b5 16 ♜c4 ♜e8 17 ♜ad1 with a faint edge to White, Topalov-Azmaiparashvili, Madrid 1996.

8...♜ge7

After 8...♜f6 White could continue 9 d5 or try 9 ♙xc6!? ♙xc6 10 dxe5 ♜xe4 11 exd6, when Black should sacrifice a pawn with 11...0-0 12 dxc7 ♜xc7, as 11...♜xd6 12 ♜xd6 cxd6 13 ♜fd2! 0-0 14 ♜xe4 clearly favours White.

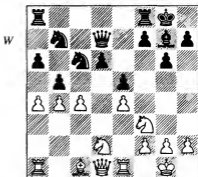
9 d5

9 ♙e3 is an important alternative. Then after 9...0-0 10 ♜bd2 ♜e8 11 ♙b3 b6 12 dxe5 dxe5 13 ♜c4 ♜h8 14 ♜c1 ♙g4 15 ♜g5, 15...h6 16 h3! ♙d7 17 ♜f3 ♜h7 18 a4 led to a small advantage for White in Karpov-Spassky, Bugojno 1986, but 15...♜d8 16 h3 ♙c8, as in Boudy-Smagin, Skopje 1987, looks to be an improvement for Black.

9...♜a5!?

9...♜b8 10 ♙xd7+ ♜xd7 11 ♙e3 h6 12 ♜fd2 0-0 13 c4 f5 14 f3 was slightly better for White in J.Polgar-Spassky, Budapest (4) 1993.

10 ♙xd7+ ♜xd7 11 ♜bd2 b5 12 b4 ♜b7 13 a4 0-0 14 c4 c5! 15 dxc6 ♜xc6 (D)

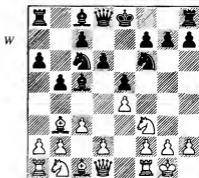
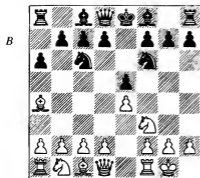


Zso.Polgar-Kamsky, New Delhi 1990. Now White can keep the advantage with 16 ♙a3.

6 Møller and Arkhangelsk Variations

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♙b5 a6 4 ♙a4
 ♘f6 5 0-0 (D)

**White Plays d4: Black Reacts
 with ...♙b6**

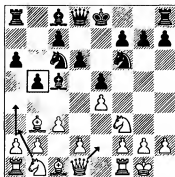


The Arkhangelsk Variation (5...b5 6 ♙b3 ♙b7) and the Møller Variation (5...♙c5 or 5...b5 6 ♙b3 ♙c5) represent ambitious plans of development by Black. In particular, the variation 5...b5 6 ♙b3 ♙c5 has in the last few years become increasingly popular at the highest levels, so much so that it's even threatening to become Black's main reply to the Lopez. The closely related Arkhangelsk went through a similar vogue, although on a slightly smaller scale, in the early 1990s. Both variations can lead to very sharp play. Against these lines, I'm recommending that White should play c3 and d4, but care is needed with move-orders.

In this theoretical position, if White plays 8 d4 Black reacts with 8...♙b6!, maintaining the pawn on e5 and keeping the pressure on d4. If Black were forced to play 8...exd4, relinquishing the centre, then his whole strategy would have been at fault. 8...♙b6 works through tactical means, as can be seen in the theory section.

White Attacks with a4

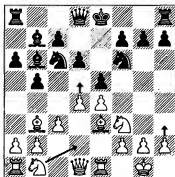
With Black's bishop on c5 and knight on c6 (see diagram overleaf), there is no real opportunity for Black to link his pawn-chain with ...c5. This can in fact leave the b5-pawn rather isolated and vulnerable to attack. One of White's



weapons in these variations is to attack the pawn with an early a4. This assault can be sustained by moves such as ♖a3 and ♖e2.

White Protects d4 with ♗e3

B



In some variations White will try to negate the pressure from the b6-bishop by playing ♗e3. This protects the d4-pawn and thus allows White to continue to develop smoothly with ♘bd2. Often White will play h3, in order to prevent ...♗g4. With the white bishop on e3, Black has to be wary of the

possibility of d5, followed by ♗xb6, which would leave Black with doubled pawns.

The Theory of the Møller and Arkhangelsk Variations

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0

We now consider:

- A: 5...d6 56
 B: 5...♗c5 57
 C: 5...b5 59

A)

5...d6

This delayed version of the Steinitz Defence is not very popular.

6 ♗e1

Also possible is 6 c3. After 6...♗d7 7 d4 g6 8 ♗e1 Black has two possibilities:

a) 8...♗g7 transposes to Chapter 5, Line C22.

b) 8...♖e7 9 ♘bd2 ♗g7 10 ♘f1 0-0 11 ♗g5 h6 12 ♗h4 ♖e8 13 ♗c2 ♘h5 14 ♘e3 is slightly better for White, Jansa-Psakhis, Bor 1985.

6...b5

Seizing the chance to exchange the Lopez bishop. Other tries are:

a) 6...♗g4 7 c3 ♘d7 8 d4 ♗e7 9 h3 ♗xf3 10 ♖xf3 ♗g5 11 ♘a3 ♗xc1 12 ♖axc1 0-0 13 ♖cd1 ♖e7 14 ♘c2 b5 15 ♗b3 ♘a5 16 ♘e3 ♘xb3 17 axb3 and White has more central control, plus a chance to attack Black's weak a6-pawn, Gufeld-Bronstein, USSR Ch 1963.

b) 6...♙c7 7 c3 ♗g4 8 h3 ♙h5 9 ♙xc6+ bxc6 10 d4 exd4 11 cxd4 0-0 12 ♖c3 ♜e8 13 ♙f4 ♗d7 14 ♜c1 h6 15 ♗d3 with a small plus, Tal-Kuijpers, Moscow 1963.

7 ♙b3 ♖a5

7...♙e7!, transposing to the main-line Closed Lopez, discussion of which starts in Chapter 9, is Black's best course.

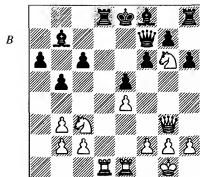
8 d4 ♖xb3 9 axb3 ♙b7 10 ♙g5 h6 11 ♙xf6 ♗xf6 12 ♖c3 c6

12...♙e7 13 ♖d5 ♙xd5 14 exd5 exd4 15 ♖xd4 0-0 16 ♖c6 leaves the knight far superior to the bishop.

13 ♗d3 ♗e7 14 dxe5 dxe5 15 ♙ad1

Threatening 16 ♖xe5; to meet this Black is forced into an ugly pawn move.

15...f6 16 ♖h4 ♙d8 17 ♗g3 ♗f7 18 ♖g6 (D)



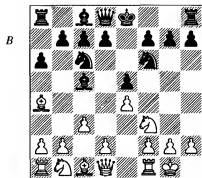
Konstantinopolsky-Efremov, corr 1955. White's lead in development is the most important factor in the position, leaving him with a clear advantage.

B)

5...♙c5

The advantage of this particular move-order is that the variation 5...b5 6 ♙b3 ♙c5 7 a4 is avoided. On the other hand, White also has extra possibilities now.

6 c3 (D)



6...b5

Other moves are known to be bad:

a) 6...♙a7 7 d4 ♖xe4 8 ♜e1 f5 9 ♖bd2 0-0 10 ♖xe4 fxe4 11 ♙g5 ♗e8 12 ♜xe4 d6 13 dxe5 ♗g6 (13...♙f5 14 ♜f4 dxe5 15 ♜xf5 ♜xf5 16 ♗b3+ wins) 14 ♜f4 ♜xf4 15 ♙xf4 ♙g4 16 ♗b3+ ♗f7 17 ♖g5 ♗xb3 18 ♙xb3+ 1-0 Capablanca – Milner-Barry, Margate 1935.

b) 6...♙b6 is an improvement, as the bishop shields the b7-pawn from attack. Nevertheless, White can still continue with 7 d4 ♖xe4 8 ♜e1 f5 9 ♖bd2 0-0 10 ♖xe4 fxe4 11 ♜xe4 d6 12 ♙g5 ♗e8 13 dxe5 ♙f5 14 ♜f4, when 14...♗h5 15 ♗d5+ ♖h8 16 ♙xc6 bxc6 17 ♗xc6 is clearly better for White, while the superior 14...dxe5

15 ♖d5+ ♜e6 16 ♜xe6+ ♔xe6 17 ♜xf8+ ♜xf8 18 ♔xc6 bxc6 19 ♔e3 still leaves Black with many pawn weaknesses.

7 ♔c2!?

7 ♔b3 transposes to Line C.

The text-move is an attempt to take advantage of Black's move-order. Black can try:

B1: 7...d5!? 58

B2: 7...d6 59

B1)

7...d5!? 8 d4!

Reacting immediately in the centre steers the game into very tactical waters. Less convincing is 8 exd5, when Black makes use of the bishop's absence from b3 with 8...♜xd5!, followed by ...0-0, solving all his opening problems.

8...dxe4 9 ♔xe5

9 dxe5 is also interesting, when 9...exf3 10 ♜xd8+ ♔xd8 11 exf6 appears good for White. A stronger possibility is Lutz's suggestion 9...♜xd1 10 ♜xd1 ♔xf2+! 11 ♔f1 (White can try 11 ♔xf2, but after 11...♔g4+ 12 ♔g3 exf3 13 ♔e4 ♔gxe5 14 ♔f4 ♜b8 15 gxf3 ♔e6 White has little else but to regain the pawn with 16 ♔xc6+ ♔xc6 17 ♔xc7 ♜c8, with an equal position) 11...♔g4 12 ♔xe4 ♔b7 and Black seems OK. For example, the continuation 13 h3 ♔e3+ 14 ♔xf2 ♔xd1+ 15 ♔e2 0-0-0 16 ♔bd2 ♔xc3+! 17 bxc3 ♜he8 leaves Black well coordinated.

9...♔xe5 10 dxe5 ♜xd1 11 ♜xd1 ♔g4 12 ♔xe4 ♔b7

Other moves:

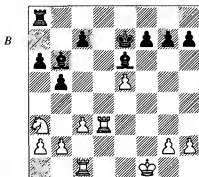
a) 12...♔xf2+ 13 ♔f1 ♜b8 14 h3 ♔e3+ 15 ♔xf2 ♔xd1+ 16 ♔e2 is clearly better for White.

b) 12...♜b8 13 ♔c6+ ♔e7 14 ♔g5+ ♔e6 15 ♔h4 ♔xe5 16 ♔d5+ ♔f5 17 ♔d2 ♔b7 18 ♔e4 ♔b6 19 ♔g3+ ♔g6 20 ♔b3, when Black's slightly vulnerable king is enough to give White the faintest of edges, Shirov-Ivanchuk, Monaco Amber rpd 1998.

13 ♔c6+ ♔e7 14 ♜d5 ♔b6 15 ♔xa8 ♔d3+

15...♔c6? 16 ♜d4 ♔d3 17 ♔g5+f6 18 ♔e4 ♔xe5 19 ♔e3 was winning for White in Lutz-Onishchuk, Bundesliga 1996/7. The text-move is Lutz's suggested improvement.

16 ♔f1 ♔xc1 17 ♔a3 ♔e6 18 ♜xc1 ♔xa8 19 ♜d3 (D)



Black's two bishops and the pawn weaknesses on a2 and e5 give Black some compensation for the exchange, although it's questionable whether this is enough. In his analysis Lutz gives 19...♔xa2 20 c4 b4 21 c5 ♔a7 22 ♔c4 ♔xc5 23 ♔a5 ♔b6 24 ♔c6+ ♔f8 25 ♔xb4 ♔e6 26 ♔c6, with a

clear advantage to White. Onishchuk was not sufficiently put off the line, however, and later repeated it. He preferred 19...♙f5 20 ♖dd1 ♙g4 21 ♖d3 ♙f5 22 ♖dd1 ♙g4, when the players agreed to a draw in N.Mariano-Onishchuk, Jakarta 1997. Of course White could try to continue, by moving his rook off the d-file, but this would give Black counterchances with ...♖d8. It seems that more practical examples of 7...d5 are required before any real assessment can be given.

B2)

7...d6 8 d4 ♙b6 9 h3

It's worth expending a tempo to prevent ...♙g4, so that White's pawn-centre can be kept intact.

9...0-0 10 ♙e3!?

One advantage of having the bishop on c2 is that the e4-pawn is protected. Thus White need not rush to play ♖bd2, but can develop this bishop first, lending crucial support to the d4-pawn.

10...♙b7 11 ♖bd2 ♖e8 12 ♖e1 exd4

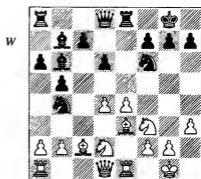
The critical test of White's play, although it may not be best. Alternatives:

a) 12...h6 13 a3 ♙a7 14 b4 ♖d7 15 ♖b3 is better for White, Rötšagov-Ziegler, Gothenburg 1998.

b) 12...♖b8 13 a3 h6 14 ♖e2 and now 14...d5?! 15 ♖xe5 dxe4 16 ♖g4 ♖h7 17 ♙xe4 ♖xe4 18 ♖xe4 f5 19 d5! gave White a very strong attack in Nunn-Hector, Oxford 1998. Nunn suggests 14...♖d7 as being a more cautious way for Black to play, giving

15 d5 ♖e7 16 a4 ♙xe3 17 ♖xe3 c6 18 axb5 exb5 19 b4 with a small plus to White.

13 cxd4 ♖b4 (D)



14 ♙g5!

Of course it would be nice to retain the bishop with 14 ♙b1, but Black seems to be able to grab the e-pawn with 14...♙xe4. Nunn then gives 15 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 16 ♖b3 c5 17 ♙xe4 ♖xe4 18 ♖g5 (18 a3 c4! 19 ♖xb4 ♙a5 is one of Black's defensive resources) 18...♖e7 19 dxc5 dxc5 20 ♖ad1 ♖e8 and Black defends.

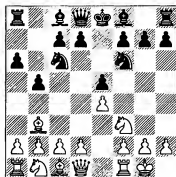
14...♖xc2 15 ♖xc2 h6 16 ♙h4

Black has obtained the two bishops, but has been forced to relinquish the centre and in addition faces a nasty pin on the h4-d8 diagonal. The game Jansa-Martinovsky, Wrexham 1998 continued 16...g5 17 ♙g3 ♖h5 18 ♙h2 ♖f4 19 ♙xf4 gxf4 20 e5 dxe5 21 dxe5 and Black was already in serious trouble.

C)

5...b5 6 ♙b3 (D)

B



Now:

C1: 6...c5 60

C2: 6...b7 64

Before moving on to the main lines, two other very natural moves must be considered:

a) 6...d6 attempts to steer the game into a closed defence, but with Black still having the option to fianchetto his f8-bishop. Now 7 d5 looks very appetizing, but after 7...d5! 8 exd5 d4 9 e1 (or 9 c3 dxb3 10 Wxb3 d6 11 d3 f5) 9...c5 10 e5+ f8 Black's counterplay cannot be underestimated. White should probably be content with 7 c3, when 7...e7! transposes to the main-line Closed Lopez, while 7...a5 8 c2 c5 9 d4! (no need to waste a tempo on h3) 9...Wc7 10 dbd2 g6 11 b4 cxb4 12 cxb4 dc6 13 b2 g7 14 e1 0-0 15 b3 was better for White in Suetin-Ragozin, USSR Ch 1954.

b) 6...e7 is another attempt to channel the game into a normal Closed Lopez. The idea of this move-order is to deny White the possibility

of playing the Delayed Exchange Variation Deferred (which arises after 5...e7 6 xc6). White can either return to the main line with 7 e1 or attempt to punish Black's move-order with 7 d4!?:

b1) 7...xe4 transposes to the Open Defence.

b2) 7...exd4?! 8 e5! de4 (or 8...d4 9 d5 b7 10 h3 dh6 11 dx4) 9 d5 dc5 10 dx4 b7 11 df5 gives White a large advantage.

b3) 7...d6 8 c3 and now Black has two moves:

b31) 8...g4 9 h3! xf3 (9...h5 10 d5 da5 11 c2 c6 12 dxc6 0-0 13 dbd2 Wc7 14 e1 Wxc6 and now 15 df1, with the idea dg3, gains useful time on the bishop) 10 Wxf3 exd4 11 Wg3 0-0 (or 11...g6 12 d5 Wd7 13 h6 b8 14 f4 dd8 15 dd2 with a strong attack, Tal-Teschner, Vienna Echt 1957) 12 h6 de8 13 d5 Wd7 14 Wg4 Wxg4 15 hxg4 gxh6 16 xc6 dxc3 17 dxc3 b8 18 dd5 dd8 19 f3 and White has a massive bind, Gligorić-Rossetto, Portorož IZ 1958.

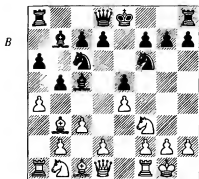
b32) 8...0-0 9 dbd2 (attempting to gain on normal Closed lines by doing without h3) 9...e8 (or 9...g4 10 h3 h5 11 d5 da5 12 c2 c6 13 dxc6 Wc7 14 e1, intending df1-g3) 10 a3!? f8 11 e1 g6 12 c2 dg7 13 d5 da5 14 b4 db7 15 c4 dd7 16 b2 and White was slightly better in Hjar-tarson-Adams, Munich 1993.

C1)

6...c5 7 c3

Move-orders are very important here. Another major line begins with 7

a4. Then 7... ♖b8 8 c3 d6 transposes to Line C12, leaving 7... ♖b7 as Black's main other move. After 7... ♖b7 White may proceed with the restrained 8 d3 followed by ♗c3, leading to a system which I'm not advocating for White. Instead White can also play the tricky 8 c3!? (D).



Then 8...d6 leads to Line C11 (this in fact was the actual move-order of Emms-Godena). So it seems that 7 a4 avoids the popular 8... ♖g4 variation, yet I can find hardly any examples of this move-order, which is very puzzling. The only question is whether Black can exploit the move-order himself.

As well as 8...d6 Black can try:

- 8... ♖b6 9 d4 ♗xe4 10 dxe5 looks good for White, e.g. 10... ♗a5 11 ♖d5!, 10... ♗c7 11 ♗g5 and 10...0-0 11 ♖d5 – in each case White has the initiative.
- 8...0-0 9 d4 ♖b6 10 dxc5 ♗xe4 11 ♖d5 transposes to line 'a'.
- 8... ♗xe4 (the critical test) 9 ♖e2 d5 (9... ♗a5 10 ♖c2 and 9...f5 10 d3

♖xf2+ 11 ♖h1 are favourable to White) 10 d3 ♖xf2+ (10... ♗f6 11 d4 ♖b6 12 dxe5 is clearly better for White) 11 ♖h1 ♗g3+ (or 11... ♗c5 12 ♖xf2 ♗xb3 13 ♗d4!) 12 hxg3 ♖xg3 with a critical position where Black has three pawns for the white piece. However, it seems that White can continue to attack with 13 ♗g5!, ready to meet 13...h6 with 14 ♖h5!.

Practical tests are needed, but it seems that 7 a4 ♖b7 8 c3 is a very playable alternative for White.

7...d6

Reinforcing the e5-pawn, thus allowing the bishop to retreat when attacked by White's d4 advance. Other moves give White more options:

a) 7...0-0 is hardly ever seen. One line that looks good for White is 8 d4 ♖b6 9 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 10 dxe5 ♗xe4 11 ♖d5 ♖h4 12 ♖e3! ♖xe3 13 fxe3 c6 14 ♖f4! and the best Black can do is 14... ♗f2 15 ♖e2 ♖g5 16 ♖xf7+ ♖xf7 17 ♖xf2, with ♗d2-c4 to follow.

b) 7... ♗xe4 8 d4 ♖b6 and probably the simplest here is 9 dxe5 0-0 10 ♖d5 with a clear plus.

8 a4 (D)

An active waiting move. I imagine it should be asked what's wrong (if anything) with the most natural move here. Things may always change, but currently 8 d4 is not the most popular move. After 8... ♖b6 White can choose from:

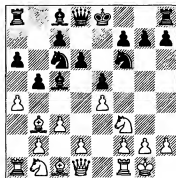
a) 9 ♖g5 h6 10 ♖h4 g5! 11 ♖g3 and now both 11... ♖g4 and 11...0-0 are fine for Black, according to theory.

b) 9 h3 ♖b7 10 ♖c1 (10 ♖e3 is impossible here owing to the simple

10...♖xe4!) 10...0-0 11 ♔g5 h6 12 ♙h4 ♜e8 13 dxe5 ♜xe5 14 ♜xe5 dxe5 15 ♝d2 ♞d6 with an equal position, Zapata-Godena, Erevan OL 1996.

c) 9 dxe5 ♜xe5 10 ♜xe5 dxe5 11 ♞xd8+ ♝xd8 12 ♙xf7 ♜f8 13 ♙d5 ♜xd5 14 exd5 ♙b7 15 ♙c3 ♙xe3 16 fxc3 ♜xf1+ 17 ♝xf1 ♙xd5 with a level endgame, de Firmian-Tkachev, Biel 1995.

d) 9 a4!? (a new attempt) 9...♙g4 10 axb5 axb5 11 ♜xa8 ♞xa8 12 h3 ♙h5 13 d5 ♜e7 14 ♙c2 ♙g6 15 ♞c2 c6 16 dxc6 ♞xc6 17 ♜e1 and White was a shade better in Leko-Adams, Dortmund 1998.



B

Black now has three main replies:

C11: 8...♙b7 62

C12: 8...♜b8 62

C13: 8...♙g4 63

C11)

8...♙b7 9 d4 ♙b6 10 ♙g5

10 ♜e1 would transpose into the Arkhangelsk Defence, but perhaps White can do without this move.

10...exd4

This is probably the most accurate defence. After 10...h6 11 ♙xf6 ♞xf6 12 ♙d5 0-0 13 ♜a3 White has the option of recapturing on d4 with a knight. Wahls-Stern, Binz 1995 continued 13...♜fb8 14 ♜c2 bxa4 15 ♜xa4 a5 16 ♜e1 ♜e8 17 ♜e3 with a plus to White.

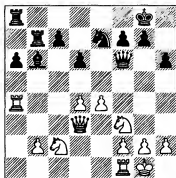
11 cxd4 h6 12 ♙xf6 ♞xf6 13 ♙d5 0-0 14 ♜a3

14 ♜c3 b4 15 ♜e2 ♜a5 16 ♙xb7 ♜xb7 was OK for Black in Movsesian-Malaniuk, Elista OL 1998.

14...♜fb8

14...b4 can be answered with 15 ♜c4.

15 ♜c2 bxa4 16 ♜xa4 ♜e7 17 ♙xb7 ♜xb7 18 ♞d3 (D)



B

Emms-Godena, Andorra Z 1998. The centre and extra space gives White a small plus.

C12)

8...♜b8

A non-committal move. The c8-bishop keeps its options open on where it will be developed. Black usually sacrifices the b5-pawn in this line.

9 d4 ♖b6 10 ♖a3! ♖g4 11 axb5
axb5 12 ♜xb5 0-0 13 ♜e1!

This seems to be White's best try for the advantage. Other moves include:

a) 13 ♖e3 exd4 14 cxd4 ♜xe4! 15 ♖d5 ♜e8 with an equal position, Nijboer-Piket, Wijk aan Zee 1998.

b) 13 ♖c2 ♖xf3! 14 ♜xf3 exd4 15 ♖g5 h6 16 ♖h4 dxc3 17 bxc3 ♜e5 and Black is fine, J.Polgar-Shirov, Linares 1997.

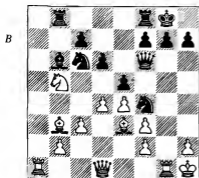
13...♖xf3 14 gxf3 ♜h5

Black hopes for play against White's weakened kingside. 14...exd4 15 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 16 cxd4 ♖xd4 doesn't regain the pawn, as White can play the desperado 17 ♖xf7+!

15 ♜h1 ♜f6 16 ♜g1 ♜f4

Perhaps Black's best chance lies in the complicated 16...exd4 17 ♖g5 ♜e5 18 ♖d5, when Wedberg suggests 18...dxc3!? 19 ♖xc6 ♖xf2 20 ♜g2 cxb2 21 ♜b1 ♜xb5 22 ♖xb5 ♜xb5, although even this line should favour White.

17 ♖e3 (D)



We are following Svidler-Shirov, Linares 1998. White has secured his position and is still a pawn to the good.

C13)

8...♖g4

A natural move, developing the bishop, connecting queen and rook and preventing d4. Later on, Black can often try to exploit the slight weakness in the white camp due to the move a4. On the minus side, this bishop can also be attacked in the usual way (h3 and ♜bd2-f1-g3) and Black may have to be prepared to exchange it for the knight.

9 d3 0-0 10 h3 ♖xf3

The other main option is to keep the bishop with 10...♖h5!?, when White's most logical idea is to begin the usual Lopez knight manoeuvre, viz. 11 ♜e1 ♜b8 (tempting White to open the a-file; otherwise Black might play ...b4) 12 axb5 axb5 13 ♜bd2 and now:

a) 13...b4!? 14 ♖a4 bxc3 15 bxc3 ♜e7 16 ♜f1 ♜d7 17 ♜g3 ♖g6 and now 18 ♖b3 h6 19 ♜b1 ♜h8 20 ♜h4 ♖h7 21 ♜f3 ♜d5 was unclear in Almasi-Shirov, Dresden rpd 1997. I prefer 18 ♜h4, grabbing the bishop-pair.

b) 13...♜a8!? and now after 14 ♜xa8 ♜xa8 15 ♜f1 ♜a7 16 ♜c2?! (16 ♖c3 is equal) 16...b4 17 g4 ♖g6 18 ♜e3 ♜b8 19 ♖c2 ♜a1! Black had taken over the initiative in Kovačević-Anand, Belgrade 1997. Perhaps the paradoxical 14 ♜b1!? is a better try for White. With the rooks still on the board Black finds it more difficult to arrange counterplay on the queenside. 14...♜d7 15 ♜f1 ♜a5 16 ♖c2 b4 17

g3 looks nice for White, while White may also keep an edge after 14...♖b8 15 ♖f1 ♖b6 16 ♙c3 ♙xc3 17 ♗xc3.

11 ♖xf3 ♗a5 12 ♙c2 b4

Black tries to exploit the negative side of White playing a4.

13 ♗d2

After 13 ♙g5!? ♖b8 14 ♗d2 bxc3 15 bxc3 ♖b2 16 ♖fc1 h6 17 ♙h4 ♖e7 Black has enough queenside play.

13...♖b8 14 ♖e1

After 14 ♖c2 ♖e8 15 ♗f3 bxc3 16 bxc3 ♗b3 17 ♙xb3 ♖xb3 18 d4 exd4 19 cxd4 ♖xf3! 20 ♖xf3 ♙xd4 Black has dangerous compensation for the exchange, Anand-Karpov, Lausanne FIDE Wch (2) 1998.

14 ♖b1 is an interesting alternative to the text-move, immediately putting the plan of ♗b3 into effect (see note to White's 15th move).

14...h6?!

15 ♗f1 would now allow 15...bxc3 16 bxc3 ♗b3, so it looks as if Black can play a waiting game. However, White's next move is a very good one. Black should prefer the more active 14...c6!? or 14...♖d7!?, planning to meet 15 ♖b1? with 15...b3 16 ♙d1 ♖xa4.

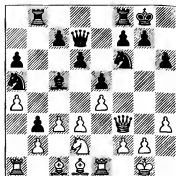
15 ♖b1!

A very deep idea. If Black does not play ...b3 then White stops this with ♗b3, exchanges knights and gains control of the important a2-g8 diagonal with the Lopez bishop. Therefore Black plays...

15...b3 16 ♙d1 ♖d7 17 ♖a1! (D)

White has expended two tempi, but the result is that the queenside is sufficiently blocked, leaving White free to

B

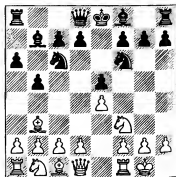


concentrate on the other wing. Leko-Gild.Garcia, Yopal 1997 continued 17...♗h7?! 18 ♖g3 ♗h8 19 ♙g4! ♖d8 20 ♗f3 ♗c6 21 ♗h4 ♗e7 22 ♖d1 ♗f6 23 d4 ♙a7 24 ♖d3 a5 25 ♙c3 exd4 26 cxd4 ♗xg4 27 hxg4 ♖d7 28 ♗f5 ♗xf5 29 gxh5 and White converted his clear positional advantage into victory. Naturally Black's play could have been improved upon, but in any case White is better after 17 ♖a1.

C2)

6...♙b7 (D)

W



7 ♖e1 ♙c5

For 7...♙e7 see Chapter 8, note to Black's 7th move.

8 c3

Black has two possible replies:

C21: 8...0-0 65

C22: 8...d6 66

C21)**8...0-0**

This tricky move-order has recently become more fashionable. Black tries to avoid the critical lines where White plays ♙c3. However, White can also make use of Black's early castling.

9 d4 ♙b6 10 ♙g5

The point of Black's move-order is seen if White plays 10 ♙e3, hoping to reach Line C22 after 10...d6. However, Black need not be so accommodating. Instead of moving the d-pawn, he can use the extra tempo to attack White's centre. After 10...exd4!? 11 cxd4 ♘a5! 12 ♙g5 ♘xb3 13 axb3 h6 14 ♙h4 g5 15 ♘xg5 ♘xe4 16 ♘xe4 ♖xh4 Black reached a very comfortable position in Anand-Ivanchuk, Belgrade 1997.

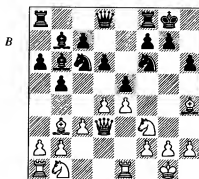
10...h6 11 ♙h4 d6

11...g5 hopes to drive the position after 12 ♙g3 d6 to Dolmatov-Beliavsky in the note to White's 10th move in Line C22. However, White shouldn't miss the chance to play 12 ♘xg5! hxg5 13 ♙xg5, when Black's survival is doubtful, e.g. 13...♙g7 14 ♖e3 ♖e8 15 ♖g3 and it's all over. This line highlights the drawback of Black's move-order involving an early ...0-0. The ...g5 lunge can often be met by this effective sacrifice.

11...♖e8 is a safer move. White should continue with 12 ♖d3, for example 12...d6 13 ♘bd2 ♘a5 14 ♙c2 c5 15 d5 c4 16 ♖e2 g6 17 ♘f1 ♙g7 18 ♖d2 ♖h8 19 h3 ♖c7 20 ♘g3 ♙c8 21 ♘h2 with an edge to White, Beliavsky-Dorfman, USSR Ch 1975.

12 ♖d3 (D)

Supporting the d-pawn, so that ♘bd2 can be played. This position can also be reached via 8...d6 9 d4 ♙b6 10 ♙g5 h6 11 ♙h4 0-0 12 ♖d3, although that move-order allows 11...g5! (see Line C22, note to White's 10th move).

**12...♘a5**

12...g5 once again runs into the piece sacrifice 13 ♘xg5! hxg5 14 ♙xg5:

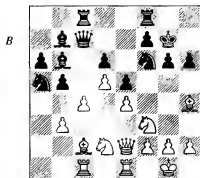
a) 14...♙g7 15 ♖c3 ♖d7 16 ♖g3 ♘h5 17 ♖f3 ♙g6 18 ♙d1! ♘g3 19 ♖f6+ ♙h7 20 ♖h6+ ♙g8 21 ♙f6 and Black is mated.

b) 14...exd4 15 e5! ♘xe5 16 ♖xc5 ♙g7 17 ♙xf6+ ♙xf6 18 ♖f5+ ♙g7 19 ♖g4+ 1-0 Diaz Perez-Valdes, Cuba 1988.

13 ♙c2 c5 14 d5 c4 15 ♖e2 g6

After 15...g5 White can play 16 Qxg5! ? hxg5 17 Rxg5 Qg7 18 Wf3 , as in Hübner-Beliavsky, Munich 1990, or the more restrained 16 Rg3! ? Qh5 17 b4 cxb3 18 axb3 Qxg3 19 hxg3 f5 20 exf5 Rxd5 21 Qbd2 Rc8 22 Wd3 , with an advantage to White in both cases.

16 Qbd2 Rc8 17 Rac1 Qg7 18 b4 cxb3 19 axb3 Wc7 20 c4 (D)



Mecking-Planinc, Mar del Plata 1971. White's extra space guarantees an edge.

C22)

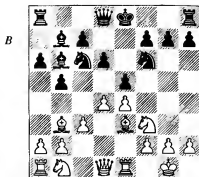
8...d6

The most common move.

9 d4 Rb6 10 Re3 (D)

Defending the d-pawn, thus preparing the development of the knight on d2. White has other moves here, but this method of development causes Black most problems. In the early days of the Arkhangelsk, 10 Rg5 was very common, but after 10...h6 11 Rh4 g5! 12 Rg3 0-0 was discovered, Black's practical results became very

good. One example from here is 13 Wd3 Qh5 14 Qbd2 Wf6 15 Rd5 Rac8 16 a4 Qxg3 17 hxg3 exd4 18 axb5 axb5 19 Rxc6 Rxc6 20 Qxd4 Rd7 and Black had nothing to worry about in Dolmatov-Beliavsky, Moscow GMA 1990.



10...0-0

The e-pawn is indirectly protected: 10... Qxc4? loses a piece to 11 d5 followed by 12 Rxb6 .

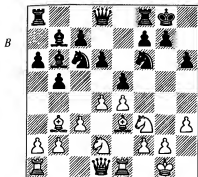
11 Qbd2 h6

This move, preparing ... Qg4 without allowing Rg5 , is Black's most common here, but there are alternatives:

a) 11... Qd7 12 Rg5 Qe7 13 Qf1 Qh8 14 Qg3 f6 15 Re3 is a little better for White, Khalifman-Mikhalchishin, Kuibyshev 1986.

b) 11... exd4! ? 12 cxd4 Qb4 13 Wb1! c5 14 a3 Qc6 (Enders-Mainka, German Ch (Binz) 1994) and now I like 15 dxc5 Rxc5 16 Rxc5 dxc5 17 e5 Qd5 18 Qe4 c4 19 Rc2 , with chances of a kingside attack.

12 h3 (D)



Now Black has a sizeable choice of ideas:

C221: 12...e8 67

C222: 12...exd4 67

C223: 12...b8 68

Less important tries are:

a) 12...b8 13 d5 c7 14 xb6 cxb6 15 c2 d7 16 h4! wd8 17 f1 (Anand-Kamsky, Las Palmas PCA Ct (3) 1995) and now best for Black seems to be 17...b4! 18 cxb4 dxd5, although White can keep an edge with 19 g6! fxg6 20 b3.

b) 12...d7 13 a3 c7 14 a2 h8 15 b4 a5 (Short-Kamsky, Linares PCA Ct (6) 1994) and now Hübner suggests 16 dxe5 xe3 17 xe3 dxe5 18 d4 with a slight advantage to White.

C221)

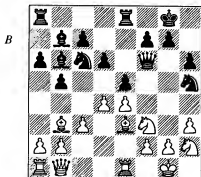
12...e8 13 b1!

This is the only decent way to cover the e4-pawn. Both 13 c2 and 13 c2 would allow Black to reply 13...exd4 14 cxd4 b4!.

13...h5

Black can attempt to strike back in the centre by means of 13...a5 14 c2 c5, but after 15 d5 c4 16 b4! cxb3 17 axb3 White still held the upper hand in Rowson-Emms, British League (4NCL) 1997/8.

14 f1 wf6 15 h2 (D)



In Becerra Rivero-Nguyen Anh Dung, Erevan OL 1996 Black now went astray with 15...f4? 16 g4 wg6 17 xf4 exf4 18 d5!, when White had a big advantage. More resilient is 15...exd4 16 cxd4 wg6, although White can still retain the advantage after 17 e5 wxb1 18 axb1 dxe5 19 dxe5 a5 20 xb6 cxb6 21 c2.

C222)

12...exd4

Black immediately relinquishes the centre in order to obtain play on the queenside. Play in this line can become quite sharp.

13 cxd4 b4 14 b1 c5 15 a3 dc6 15...exd4 16 dxd4 dc6 17 f5.

16 e5 dxe5 17 dxc5!?

Also possible is 17...dxc5, for example 17...d5 18 e4 c4 (18...dxe3? 19 dxf6+!! gxf6 20 Wg6+ Wh8 21 Wxh6+ Wg8 22 Bxe3 and White has a mating attack) 19 Bxb6 Wxb6 20 Bc2 dxc7 (20...Bfd8 looks stronger) 21 d6 Bc8 22 Bc4 Be6 23 Wd1 and White's pieces are well placed, Scuderi-Karlsson, corr. 1987.

17...Bc7

After 17...Ba7 White proceeds with 18 Bxh6! gxh6 19 Wg6+ Wh8 20 Wxh6+ dh7 21 e4, with a fearsome attack.

After 17...Bc7, 18 Bxh6 isn't so effective as the black bishop is more in the game on c7. After 18...gxh6 19 Wg6+ Wh8 20 Wxh6+ dh7 21 e4 d4 22 dxd4 exd4 Black was able to beat off the attack in Khalifman-Malaniuk, Minsk 1985. In the later game Psakhis-Volzhin, Metz 1994, White improved with 18 Bc2 d7 (18...b4, preventing White's next, should be considered) 19 b4! d5 20 Wb2 Wb8 21 Bb3 dg6 22 Bbd1 and White's pieces were more active.

C223)

12...Bb8

Preparing to answer 13 d5 with 13...Bxe3, as after 14 dxc6 Bxd2 15 cxb7 the black rook is no longer attacked.

13 Bc2 Be8 14 a3

Eliminating ...d4 ideas and so preparing d1-f3. We have now reached a position that was discussed in Line B2 (note 'b' to Black's 12th

move). The only difference here is that Black has the move, as White has played Ba4-b3-c2, rather than just Ba4-c2. This extra tempo gives Black better chances of equality.

14...d7

Once again, adding more pressure to e4.

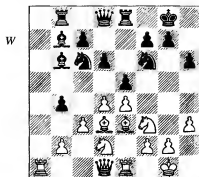
15 a4

Perhaps White should consider keeping the tension with 15 Wb1!?

15...d6!

Now the b4-square is once again available, the knight is not slow in hopping back. Note that 15...exd4 16 cxd4 dxe4? loses a piece to 17 dxe4 Bxe4 18 a5.

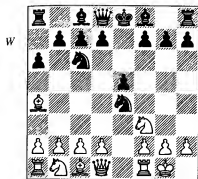
16 axb5 axb5 17 Bd3 b4 (D)



Ki.Georgiev-Beliavsky, Yugoslavia 1996 continued 18 d5 bxc3 19 bxc3 Bxe3 20 Bxe3 d7 21 c4 c6 22 Bf1 Wc7 with an equal position. White can also consider 18 Bb5 bxc3 19 bxc3 exd4 20 Bxd4 dxd4 21 cxd4 c6, although this also looks fairly level.

7 The Open Lopez

1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♜c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4
♜f6 5 0-0 ♜xe4 (D)

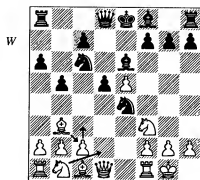


With 5...♜xe4 Black basically chooses dynamic counterplay over solid defence. He makes space for his pieces to develop onto active posts and squashes any thoughts White might have of applying the 'Spanish Torture' so often seen in the closed defences.

However, there's a certain price to pay for all this activity. The position becomes open quite quickly and in order not to suffer a quick onslaught down the e-file, Black is forced to compromise his pawn-structure somewhat, leaving White with potential targets to exploit in the middlegame. Nevertheless, the Open Defence has its fair share of supporters. Viktor Korchnoi is probably its most famous adherent, while of the new generation

of top players one could point to Vishy Anand, who employed it in his 1995 World Championship clash with Kasparov and has continued to use it since.

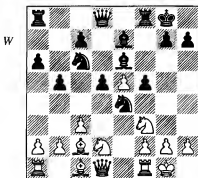
The Strategic Starting Position



This is the typical position, which is reached after 8 moves of the Open Lopez. The first thing to notice is that Black's pieces occupy active squares. Given a few free moves, Black would probably continue with ...♗c5, ...0-0 and perhaps ...f6, to create a semi-open f-file and attack the f2-square. It goes without saying that White must act energetically in the diagram position, else Black could easily take over the initiative once he has completed his development. Here I'm advocating the move 9 ♜bd2, which was made

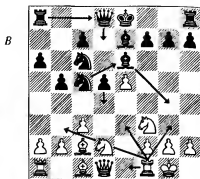
popular by Anatoly Karpov. One of White's main ideas is to put immediate pressure on Black's strong knight on e4. This pressure can be enhanced with such moves as c3 and ♖c2. Black is asked very early on what to do with this knight.

Black Supports the Knight with ...f5



Black has just played **11...f5**, lending support to the under-fire knight. White now has a big decision to make: whether to capture *en passant*, or to play around the knight and concentrate on the weaknesses in the black camp. On this occasion the main theoretical move is **12 ♖b3** (instead of **12 exf6**). After **12...♗d7** White can use a tactical trick to justify the move **13 ♖fd4**. Now **13...♝xe5?** **14 f3 ♘c5** **15 ♖e1 ♘c6** **16 ♘xc6 ♗xc6** **17 ♔d4 ♗d7** **18 b4** drops a piece, so the normal continuation is **13...♘d4** **14 ♘xd4 c5** **15 ♘xe6 ♗xe6** **16 f3 ♔g5** **17 a4**, when White is slightly better (see the theory section for more on this position).

Black Moves the Knight



On this occasion Black has retreated his knight to c5, where it controls some important squares. One of White's major plans in this position involves the usual knight manoeuvre with (after **♖e1**) **♔f1-g3/e3**. White's pieces would then point impressively at the black kingside. In addition, White has the e5-pawn as a spearhead, so it's easy to see that White can often build up a menacing attack against the black king. White also often plays **♔b3**, challenging the c5-knight. If this is exchanged, it clears the way for the white queen to go to d3, where it sets up a powerful battery with the bishop against the h7-pawn.

For the reasons outlined above, Black often delays castling in favour of first improving the position of his pieces. For example, Black often plays the move **...♗g4**, giving White a pin to think about. This bishop can also be re-routed via h5 to g6, in order to blunt White's attack along the b1-h7 diagonal. This also leaves the e6-square

vacant for the knight to hop back and completely block the e5-pawn. Another common feature is Black doubling behind the d-pawn with ...♖d7 and ...♗d8. The idea of this is not only to add extra support to the often-vulnerable d5-pawn, but also to facilitate a possible ...d4 advance. Of course the strength of this advance is always dependent on the placing of the various pieces, but a successful ...d4 will completely free Black's position.

The Theory of the Open Lopez

1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♗c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♖f6 5 0-0 ♗xe4 6 d4 b5

This is by far the most common move, but White must be aware of two other possibilities:

a) 6...exd4 gives us the so-called Riga Variation. This line is very rare, chiefly because the endgame arising from the sequence 7 ♗e1 d5 8 ♗xd4 ♗d6 9 ♗xc6 ♗xh2+ 10 ♖h1! (10 ♖xh2 ♗h4+ leads to perpetual check) 10...♗h4 11 ♗xe4+ dxe4 12 ♗d8+ ♗xd8 13 ♗xd8+ ♖xd8 14 ♖xh2 has been known for many years to favour White.

b) 6...♗e7 isn't seen very often, but in fact it's quite a playable move. White should continue 7 ♗e1 f5 (after 7...b5 8 ♗xe4 d5 9 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 10 ♗xe5 bxa4 11 c4 dxc4 12 ♗xa4+ ♗d7 13 ♗xc4 0-0 14 ♗c3 ♗d6 15 ♗g5 ♗b8 16 ♗e2 White had a healthy extra pawn in Smirin-Piket, Wijk aan Zee 1994) 8 dxe5 0-0 9 ♗b3+ ♖h8 10

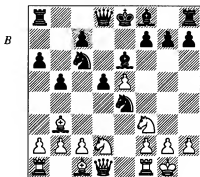
♗c3! ♗xc3 11 bxc3 h6 (11...♗e8 is probably stronger, although I still prefer White after 12 ♗d4 ♗g6 13 ♗f3) 12 a4 a5 13 ♗b1 b6 14 ♗d5 ♗b7 15 ♗d4 ♗b8 16 ♗b5 ♗c5 17 ♗h5 with a clear advantage, Geller-Kurajica, Wijk aan Zee 1977.

7 ♗b3 d5

After 7...exd4?! 8 ♗e1 d5 White plays the surprising 9 ♗c3!, after which Black has no good way through the tactics. Following 9...dxc3 10 ♗xd5 ♗b7 11 ♗xe4 ♗e7 12 ♗e2 Black is struggling to castle, while 9...♗e6 10 ♗xe4 dxe4 11 ♗xe4 ♗e7 12 ♗xe6 fxe6 13 ♗xd4! 0-0 14 ♗g4 ♗xd4 15 ♗xd4 ♗c8 16 ♗e4 ♗f6 17 ♗e3 left White clearly on top in Fischer-Trifunović, Bled 1961.

8 dxe5 ♗e6 9 ♗bd2 (D)

The move which Karpov popularized. It's basically a refinement over the old main line, 9 c3. Black's most active move against that is 9...♗c5.



However, in the current position (after 9 ♗bd2), 9...♗c5 is less enticing, as White can immediately head

off into a slightly better endgame. Black's only real attempt to make use of the move-order is with 9...♖c5 10 c3 d4!?, as in Line C. Anyway, I'll start by listing Black's three main replies:

- A: 9...♖c5 72
 B: 9...♗e7 73
 C: 9...♖c5 75

A)

9...♖c5

The move that 9 ♖bd2 had been designed to prevent!

10 ♖xe4

This line seems to give White a comfortable endgame, with a 'risk-free' but very small advantage. If White wants to keep more pieces on the board, then he should try a queen move, viz.:

a) 10 ♖e2 gives Black two possible replies:

a1) 10...♗f5 11 a4 b4 (11...♞b8 12 axb5 axb5 13 ♖xe4 dxe4 14 ♖g5 0-0 15 ♖e3 ♖e7 16 e6! ♖xe3 17 exf7+ ♖h8 18 ♖xe3 h6 19 ♞a6 ♖e5 20 ♖e6 ♞xf7 21 ♖d4 ♖c8 22 ♖xf7 ♖xa6 23 ♖xe4 gave White an extra pawn in Tkachev-Karolyi, Oakham 1993) 12 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 (12...dxe4 13 ♖g5 looks quite unpleasant for Black) 13 ♖e3 ♖xe3 14 ♖xe3 0-0 15 ♖g5 ♖g6 16 ♞ad1 and the pressure on d5 proves troublesome for Black, Emms-Gretarsson, Kopavogur 1994.

a2) 10...♖xd2 (the safest move) 11 ♖xd2 0-0 12 ♞ad1 and now:

a21) 12...♖g4 13 ♖d3! ♖xf3 14 ♖xf3 ♖xe5 15 ♖f5 ♞e8 (15...♖g6?! 16 ♖xd5 ♖c7 17 ♖xf7+ ♖xf7 18

♖xc5 is clearly good for White, Wahls-A.Mikhalevski, Berlin 1994) 16 ♖g5 ♖c8 17 ♖xc8 ♞axc8 18 ♞xd5 and the bishop-pair gives White the edge in this ending.

a22) 12...♖e7!?! 13 ♖e3 ♖xe3 14 ♖xe3 c6 15 h3 ♖f5 16 ♖f4 (perhaps 16 ♖c5!?) 16...♖c7 17 ♞fe1 ♞ae8 18 c3 f6 19 ♖c2 g6 20 ♞e2 (20 ♖d4!?) 20...fxe5 21 ♖xe5 ♖d6 22 ♖g3 ♖f5 and Black has just about equalized, Jansa-M.Přibyl, Czech Ch 1996.

b) The strange-looking 10 ♖e1! also deserves some attention. The idea is that on e1 the queen is less vulnerable to attack by ...♖d4. Thus 10...♖f5?! 11 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 12 ♖g5! would be in White's favour. Once again the safest way is 10...♖xd2 11 ♖xd2 0-0. Luther-V.Mikhalevski, Turin 1996 continued 12 ♞d1 ♖d7 13 ♖g5 d4?! (13...h6 looks stronger) 14 c3 h6 15 ♖xd4! ♖xd4 16 ♖e3 ♖f3+ 17 gxf3 ♖c6 18 ♖xc5 ♖xc5 19 ♖e4 ♞ad8 20 ♞d4 and White converted his extra pawn into victory.

10...dxe4 11 ♖xe6

11 ♖xd8+ ♞xd8 12 ♖g5 ♖d5 13 e6 fxe6 14 ♖xd5 exd5 15 ♖e6 ♖b6 16 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 gives Black good compensation for the exchange, Stisis-A.Mikhalevski, Israeli Cht 1996.

11...♖xd1

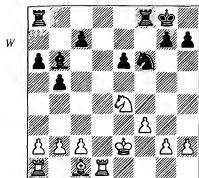
After 11...fxe6, 12 ♖g5 ♖xd1 leads to the same thing, but White could also consider 12 ♖d2!?

12 ♞xd1 fxe6 13 ♖g5 0-0 14 ♖xe4 ♖b6 15 ♖f1

White kept a minute advantage after 15 b3 ♖xe5 16 ♖f1 ♖g4 17 f3 ♖f6 (17...♖hx2+ 18 ♖e2 is clearly better

for White) 18 ♖g3 ♕d5 19 c4 bxc4 20 bxc4 in Topalov-Leko, Cap d'Agde rpd 1994.

15... ♖xe5 16 ♗e2 ♖g4 17 f3 ♖f6 (D)



This is Adams-M. Přibyl, Bundesliga 1995/6. Black has one prominent weakness, the e6-pawn, which is isolated and on a semi-open file, but the activity of his pieces may be just enough to maintain the balance.

B)

9... ♗e7 10 c3 ♖c5

Other moves include:

a) 10... ♗d7 11 ♗c2 ♗f5 12 ♖d4! ♗g6 13 a4! and now after 13... 0-0? 14 ♖xe4 ♗xe4 15 axb5 axb5 16 ♗xa8 ♗xa8 17 ♗xe4 dxe4 18 e6! fxe6 19 ♖xb5 Black's wrecked pawn-structure gave White a clear advantage in Luther-Krasenkow, Asti 1996. Stronger is 13... ♖xd2, although White still keeps a plus after 14 ♗xd2.

b) 10... 0-0 11 ♗c2 f5 12 ♖b3 ♗d7 13 ♖fd4 ♖xd4 14 ♖xd4! (14 cxd4 a5 15 f3 a4 16 fxe4 axb3 17 ♗xb3 fxe4

was equal in Grünfeld-Tal, Riga IZ 1979) 14... c5 15 ♖xe6 ♗xe6 16 f3 ♖g5 17 a4 g6 (or 17... ♗ad8 18 axb5 axb5 19 ♗e2 c4 20 ♗e3 with an edge, Beliavsky-Tarjan, Bogota 1979) 18 ♖h1 ♗c6 19 ♗xg5 ♗xg5 20 f4 ♗e7 21 ♗f3 and White's protected passed pawn gives him a nice plus, Ricardi-Sorin, Buenos Aires 1996.

11 ♗c2 ♗g4

In these positions Black has many chances to advance the d-pawn, and here is one of the occasions. After 11...d4!? we have:

a) 12 ♖e4 d3 13 ♖xc5 dxc2 14 ♗xd8+ ♗xd8 15 ♖xe6 fxe6 16 ♗e3 ♗d5 17 ♗ac1 ♖xe5 18 ♖xe5 ♗xe5 19 ♗xc2 ♖f7 and White has just a tiny edge, Akopian-Daniliuk, St Petersburg 1993.

b) 12 ♖b3 d3 13 ♗b1 ♖xb3 14 axb3 ♗f5 15 ♗e3 0-0 16 ♗d4 ♗d5 17 ♗e1 and now 17... ♗fd8 18 ♗e3 ♖xd4 19 cxd4 c5 20 ♗xd3 cxd4 21 ♗e2 was better for White in Topalov-Piket, Antwerp 1997, but 17...d2!? deserves attention, e.g. 18 ♗e2 ♗xb1 19 ♗xb1 ♖xd4 20 ♖xd4 ♗g5 21 ♖f3 ♗f4 with an equal position.

The simple 11...0-0 is not seen very much. In Am. Rodriguez-Todorović, Pančevo 1987 White kept the advantage after 12 ♖b3 ♗d7 13 ♖bd4 ♖xd4 14 cxd4 ♖e4 15 ♖e1 f6 16 f3 ♖g5 17 ♖d3 fxe5 18 ♖xe5 ♗d8 19 ♗c3.

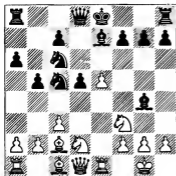
12 ♗e1 (D)

Black now has two main continuations:

B1: 12...0-0 74

B2: 12... ♗d7 75

B



The advance 12...d4 is not so effective here. After 13 $\text{c}3$! d3 (after 13...dxc3 14 $\text{c}5$ $\text{c}5$ 15 $\text{e}4$ $\text{c}1$ 16 $\text{c}1$ $\text{d}7$ 17 bxc3 White's pieces are very active) 14 $\text{b}1$ $\text{c}3$ 15 axb3 $\text{f}5$ 16 $\text{e}3$ 0-0 17 $\text{d}4$ $\text{d}5$ (after 17... $\text{c}4$ 18 $\text{c}4$ $\text{g}6$ White wins the pawn with 19 $\text{c}3$ $\text{c}3$ 20 $\text{c}6$!) 18 $\text{e}3$ $\text{a}8$ 19 $\text{c}3$ $\text{c}4$ 20 cxd4 and Black has nothing for the pawn, Geller-Anand, New Delhi 1987.

Another plan for Black is to re-route his bishop to g6. The exchange of the light-squared bishops blunts White's attacking potential. On the other hand the manoeuvre is rather time-consuming and White maintains some advantage after 12... $\text{h}5$ 13 $\text{f}1$ 0-0 14 $\text{g}3$ $\text{g}6$ 15 $\text{e}3$ $\text{d}7$ 16 h4! $\text{e}6$ 17 h5 $\text{c}2$ 18 $\text{c}2$ f6 19 exf6 $\text{c}6$ 20 h6!.

B1)

12...0-0 13 $\text{c}3$

13 $\text{f}1$ and 13 h3 are other moves, but I believe that this is the most severe test of 12...0-0.

13... $\text{e}4$

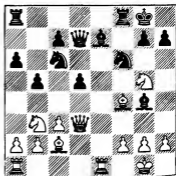
After 13... $\text{e}6$ 14 $\text{d}3$! $\text{g}6$ 15 $\text{h}6$ $\text{e}8$ 16 $\text{a}1$ $\text{f}5$ 17 $\text{d}2$ $\text{c}2$ 18 $\text{c}2$ $\text{d}7$ 19 h4! the pressure against the d5-pawn, coupled with the weak dark squares around the kingside, leaves Black with a miserable position. Emms-Rutherford, Hastings 1995 concluded 19... $\text{a}8$ 20 h5! $\text{f}8$ 21 $\text{d}2$ $\text{g}7$ 22 hxg6 hxg6 23 $\text{g}5$ $\text{e}7$ 24 $\text{b}4$ $\text{d}4$ 25 cxd4 $\text{e}6$? 26 $\text{f}6$ $\text{c}8$? (26... $\text{c}6$ 27 exf6 $\text{d}6$ 28 $\text{e}5$ $\text{f}8$ 29 $\text{d}1$ $\text{e}6$ 30 $\text{h}6$ $\text{c}6$ 31 $\text{g}5$ $\text{d}7$ 32 $\text{e}3$ wins for White) 27 $\text{h}6$ 1-0.

14 $\text{f}4$ f6

A more recent try is 14... $\text{e}8$ 15 $\text{c}4$ dxe4 16 $\text{c}4$ $\text{d}1$ + 17 $\text{c}1$ $\text{c}3$ 18 gxf3, as in Kuczynski-Marin, Budapest Z 1993, but of course, only White has winning chances in this endgame.

15 exf6 $\text{c}6$ 16 $\text{d}3$ $\text{d}7$ 17 $\text{g}5$! (D)

B



Now 17... $\text{g}6$? 18 $\text{c}7$! $\text{c}7$ 19 $\text{c}6$ + $\text{c}8$ 20 $\text{e}3$ left Black in big trouble in Am.Rodriguez-Milos, Bogota 1991. More resilient is 17...h6

18 Qh7 Kf7 (Large-Flear, British Ch (Eastbourne) 1990) and here I like the continuation 19 Qxf6+ Kxf6 20 Wh7+ Qf7 21 Qg3! , with the idea of doubling on the e-file. All in all, Black's position looks rather shaky.

B2)

12... Wd7

This queen move is the most popular response. Black delays castling in favour of improving the positioning of his pieces. In particular the rook moves from a8 to d8 to lend further support to the d5-pawn and facilitate its advance.

13 Qf1 Kd8 14 Qe3 Qh5

Grabbing a pawn by 14... Qxf3 15 Wxf3 Qxe5 runs into a fearsome attack after 16 Wg3 Qg6 17 Qf5! .

15 b4!

White must play aggressively to maintain the initiative. 15 Qf5 0-0 16 Qxe7+ Qxe7 17 Qe3 Qa4! is known to be OK for Black.

15... Qe6

15... Qe4 walks into 16 Qxd5! .

16 g4

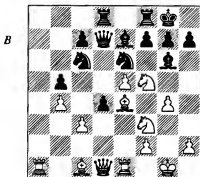
The immediate 16 Qf5 is also interesting. After 16...0-0 17 a4, Am.Rodríguez-Marin, Novi Sad OL 1990 continued 17... Kfe8 18 axb5 axb5 19 Wd3 Qg6 20 Wxb5 Qxe5 21 Wxd7 Qxd7 22 Qxe7+ Kxe7 23 Qxg6 hxg6 24 Qd4 Kee8 25 Qc6 and White had a better endgame. 17... Qg6 may be stronger, when White should transpose into the main line with 18 g4.

16... Qg6 17 Qf5 0-0 18 a4 d4

After 18... Kfe8 White bombards the b-pawn with 19 axb5 axb5 20 Qd3 and now both 20... Kb8 21 We2 Qcd8

22 Ka7 d4 23 cxd4 Qxb4 24 Kd1 , as in Shabalov-Vucić, New York 1993, and 20... Qb8 21 Qe3 , as in Galkin-Sorokin, Russia Cup 1997, are very favourable for White.

19 axb5 axb5 20 Qe4 (D)



We are following the game Habab-Marín, Budapest Z 1993, which continued 20... Kfe8 21 Wd3 Qb8 and now White's most effective way forward is 22 cxd4! Qxb4 23 Kd1 c6 24 Qe3 , when White's centre looks very powerful indeed.

C)

9... Qc5

This is Black's most principled choice. He hopes to exploit White's temporary lack of control over d4 and push his d-pawn forward.

10 c3 (D)

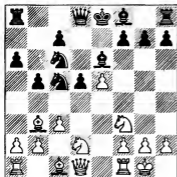
10...d4

This is the critical move, but there are many other choices here:

a) For 10... Qe7 11 Qc2 see Line B.

b) 10... Qd3 11 We2 Qxc1 12 Kaxc1 is good for White since Black has

B



spent too many moves with his knight just to exchange it for an undeveloped piece.

c) 10...♖xb3 11 ♖xb3 ♕e7 12 ♖fd4! ♖xd4 (snatching the pawn with 12...♖xe5?! is too risky; after 13 ♖e1 ♖g6 14 ♖xe6 fxe6 15 ♖d4 White had a strong initiative in G.Kuzmin-Beliavsky, USSR 1977) 13 cxd4 0-0 14 ♕d2, followed by ♖c1, and White can attack down the half-open c-file.

d) 10...g6 11 ♖e2 ♕g7 12 ♖d4! ♖xd4 (12...♖xe5 13 f4 ♖c4 14 f5 gxf5 15 ♖xf5 ♖g8 16 ♖xc4 dxc4 17 ♕c2 ♖d3 18 ♕h6 led to a crushing win for White in Karpov-Korchnoi, Baguio Wch (8) 1978) 13 cxd4 ♖b7 14 ♕c2 c5 15 f4 cxd4 16 ♖b3 ♖b6 17 ♖f2 0-0 18 ♖xd4 with an edge to White, Fishbein-Murey, Moscow 1989.

e) 10...♕g4 (this is the most important of Black's alternatives) 11 ♕c2 and now:

e1) 11...♕e7 transposes into Line B on page 73.

e2) 11...♖e6 12 ♖e1 ♕c5 13 ♖f1 ♕h5 14 ♖g3 ♕g6 15 ♕b3 ♖e7 16 h4 gave White a useful initiative in the

game Kovaliov-Kaidanov, Blagoveshchensk 1988.

e3) 11...♗d7 12 ♖e1 ♖d8! (once again, 12...♕e7 is Line B, while in Leko-Anand, Linares 1999, Black tried another lunge with 12...d4, but was worse after 13 ♖b3 dxc3 14 ♖xd7+ ♕xd7 15 bxc3) 13 ♖b3! ♖e6 14 a4 ♕e7 15 axb5 axb5 16 ♖d3 and now Am.Rodriguez-Kharitonov, Bayamo 1989 continued 16...♖b8?! 17 ♖fd4 ♖cx4 18 cxd4 with a clear plus for White. Stronger is 16...♕h5 but after 17 ♖xb5 ♕xf3 18 gxf3 ♖xe5 19 ♖xd7+ ♖xd7 the bishop-pair grants White an edge.

e4) 11...d4! led to an equal position after 12 ♖b3 d3 13 ♕b1 ♖d5 14 ♖xc5 ♕xc5 15 ♖xd3 ♖xd3 16 ♕xd3 0-0-0 17 ♕e4 ♕xf3 18 gxf3 ♖xe5 in Leko-Anand, Tilburg 1998. This line needs further tests, perhaps with 12 h3 or 12 ♖e1!?

After 10...d4 White has two main alternatives:

C1: 11 ♖g5!? 76

C2: 11 ♕xe6 79

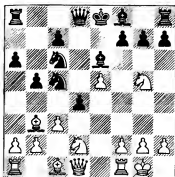
The former is the tactical option, whereas the latter leads to more positional play.

C1)

11 ♖g5!? (D)

This staggering move, which simply leaves a knight *en prise*, is an invention of Karpov's trainer Igor Zaitsev. It caused a sensation when Karpov unleashed it against Korchnoi in game 10 of their 1978 match. Now Black has:

B



C11: 11...dxc3 77

C12: 11...♙d5!? 78

C13: 11...♖xg5 78

C11)

11...dxc3

This move requires some heavy repair-work after Kasparov's crushing win over Anand in their 1995 World Championship match.

12 ♖xe6 fxe6 13 bxc3 ♖d3 14 ♙c2!

This move is the prelude to a spectacular rook sacrifice.

14...♖xc3 15 ♖b3!! ♖xb3

Black can decline the rook, but 15...♙d8 16 ♙d2 ♙xd2 17 ♖xd2 ♖xe5 (or 17...♖xe5 18 ♙e1 ♖f6 19 ♖b3) 18 ♖b3 gave White the advantage in Khalifman-Hraček, Pärnu 1996.

16 ♙xb3 ♖d4

After 16...♖xa1 White replies with 17 ♖h5+! and now:

a) 17...♙d7 18 ♙xe6+ ♖xe6 19 ♖g4+ ♖f7 (19...♙d5 20 ♖d7+ ♙d6 21 ♖f7+ ♖xe5 22 ♖xg7+ ♖e6 23 ♖xa1 wins) 20 ♖f3+ ♖e6 21 ♖xc6+ ♙d6 22 exd6 ♖e5 23 ♙b2 ♖xb2

(23...♖xd6 24 ♙e1+ ♖f7 25 ♖f3+ ♖g6 26 ♖g4+ ♖f7 27 ♖xg7#) 24 ♙e1+ ♖f6 25 ♖f3+ ♖g6 26 ♖g4+ ♖h6 27 ♙e6+ ♖f6 (or 27...g6 28 ♖f4+ ♖h5 29 g4+ ♖h4 30 ♖h6+ ♖xg4 31 ♙e4+ ♖f5 32 ♖f4#) 28 h4! and Black must give up a whole queen to avoid mate.

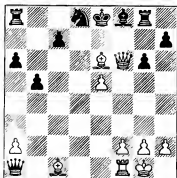
b) 17...g6 18 ♖f3 and now:

b1) 18...0-0-0 19 ♖xc6 ♖xe5 20 ♖xa6+ ♖b8 (or 20...♙d7 21 ♙b2!) 21 ♙e3 and White's attack is decisive.

b2) 18...♖d4 19 ♖xa8+ ♖f7 20 ♙d1 ♖xb3 21 ♖f3+ ♖g8 22 ♙a3! wins the queen.

b3) 18...♖d8 19 ♖f6 ♙g8 20 ♙xe6 (D).

B



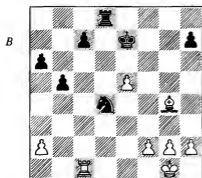
Now 20...♙e7 21 ♙d7+! ♖xd7 22 e6+, 20...♖xe6 21 ♖xc6+ ♙e7 22 ♖xg8+ and 20...♙g7 21 ♙f7+ ♖xf7 22 ♖e6+ ♖f8 23 ♙a3+ win for White. Tougher is 20...♙g7, but 21 ♙a3 ♖xf1+ 22 ♖xf1 still leaves Black without a good defence.

17 ♖g4 ♖xa1 18 ♙xe6 ♙d8

Black's most resilient defence is 18...♖c3! 19 ♙d7+ ♖f7 20 ♙e3 ♙c5,

when White has many promising continuations, but I haven't yet found a clear win.

19 ♖h6 ♜c3 20 ♗xg7 ♜d3 21 ♗xh8 ♜g6 22 ♗f6 ♗e7 23 ♗xe7 ♜xg4 24 ♗xg4 ♜xe7 25 ♝c1 (D)



Kasparov-Anand, New York PCA Wch (10) 1995. The endgame is winning for White.

C12)

11...♗d5

This is a relatively new idea, found by the Bosnian grandmaster Ivan Sokolov.

12 ♜xf7!?

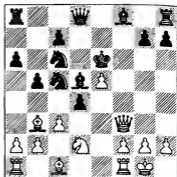
This flamboyant move is the critical test. 12 ♗xd5 ♜xd5 13 ♜b3 ♜xb3 14 axb3 ♗e7 15 ♜f3 d3 16 ♗e3 0-0 17 ♗d4 ♝fd8 was equal in Onishchuk-I.Sokolov, Wijk aan Zee 1997, while aggressive moves such as 12 ♜g4 and 12 ♜h5 are worth investigating.

12...♜xf7 13 ♜f3+ ♜e6 (D)

14 ♜e4

The latest twist in this variation was seen in Svidler-Anand, Dos Hermanas

W



1999, where White came up with the stunning idea 14 ♜g4+ ♜e7 15 e6! and following 15...♗xe6 16 ♝e1 ♜d7 17 ♗xe6 ♜xe6 18 ♜f3 ♝e8 19 ♜g5 ♜d8 20 ♗d2! Black was in big trouble, despite his extra piece.

14...♜xb3

14...♜xe4 15 ♜xe4 ♜e7 16 f4 ♗xb3 17 f5+ ♜f7 18 axb3 ♜d5 19 ♜f4 gives White a strong attack for the sacrificed piece.

15 ♜g4+ ♜f7 16 ♜f5+ ♜g8

Not, however, 16...♜e8? 17 e6! ♗xe6 18 ♜xe6+, which was winning for White in L.Dominguez-Rios, Cuba 1996.

17 e6 h6 18 ♜f7+ ♜h7 19 ♜g5+ hxg5 20 ♜h5+ ♜g8 21 ♜f7+

With a draw by perpetual check. The last word has not been spoken on this line.

C13)

11...♜xg5 12 ♜f3 0-0-0

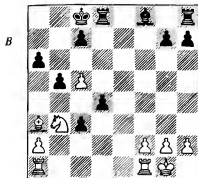
Returning the piece is Black's best idea. Instead:

a) 12...♜d7 13 ♗d5 ♗xd5 14 ♜xd5+ ♗d6 15 cxd4 ♜xd4 16 ♜c4

left Black in trouble in the game Brøndum – Brinck-Claussen, Denmark 1979.

b) 12...♔d7 13 ♖xf7+ ♕e7 14 ♗d5 ♜xe5 15 ♜e2 d3 16 ♜e1 c6 17 f4 ♜h6 18 ♖f3! led to victory for White in Wolff-Flear, London 1990.

13 ♖xe6+ fxe6 14 ♜xc6 ♜xe5 15 b4! ♜d5 16 ♜xd5 exd5 17 bxc5 dxc3 18 ♖b3 d4 19 ♖a3 (D)

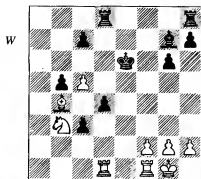


Black has two connected and advanced passed pawns for the piece. No real conclusion has been drawn as to whether this gives Black enough compensation.

19...g6!?

The older line runs 19...♔e7 20 ♗b4 ♖f6 21 a4! bxa4 (21...♕d7 22 axb5 axb5 23 ♜a6 c6 24 ♜d1 ♕e6 25 ♜xc6+ ♕d5 26 ♜xf6 ♕c4 27 ♜d6! gave White a winning position in McDonald-Morris, London 1994) 22 c6 d3 23 ♜xa4 d2 24 ♜xa6 ♕b8 25 ♜xd2 cxd2 26 ♜d1 ♜he8 27 ♕f1 ♜e1+ 28 ♜xe1 dxe1 ♜+ 29 ♕xe1 and White has some chances to make his extra pawn count, Ninov-Dimov, corr 1995.

20 ♖b4 ♖g7 21 a4 ♕d7 22 axb5 axb5 23 ♜ad1 ♕e6 (D)



This position was reached in the game Shirov-Timman, Wijk aan Zee 1996. Play continued 24 ♜fe1+ ♕d5 25 ♖xc3 ♕c4 and Black was just holding on.

C2)

11 ♖xe6

The safest continuation. After this move White can play for a small positional advantage.

11...♜xe6 12 cxd4 ♜xd4 13 a4!?

13 ♜e4 is also seen quite often, but 13 a4 poses Black some serious questions and has achieved good practical results.

13...♔e7

Black has two other sensible possibilities:

a) 13...♜b8 14 axb5 axb5 15 ♜e4 ♔e7 16 ♖e3 ♜f5 17 ♖a7! ♜xd1 18 ♜fxd1 ♜d8 19 g4 ♜xd1+ 20 ♜xd1 ♜h4 21 ♜xh4 ♖xh4 22 ♖e3 and White is ready to push on the kingside, Smirin-Hübner, Polanica Zdroj 1995.

b) 13...♙c5 14 ♖e4 ♙b6 (14...0-0 15 ♖xc5 ♖xf3+ 16 ♜xf3 ♖xc5 17 axb5 axb5 18 ♙g5! ♜xa1 19 ♙xd8 ♜xf1+ 20 ♖xf1 ♜xd8 21 g3 was slightly better for White in Topalov-Anand, Dos Hermanas 1996) 15 ♖fg5 ♖xg5 16 ♙xg5 ♜d7 and now instead of 17 axb5, as in the game Am.Rodriguez-Korneev, Barbera del Valles 1994, Rodriguez suggests 17 ♜e1 0-0 18 ♜a3!, planning to swing the rook into a kingside attack.

14 ♖xd4 ♖xd4

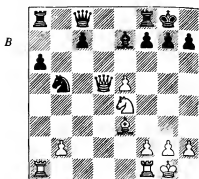
14...♜xd4 15 axb5 ♜xe5 16 bxa6 0-0 17 ♜a4 leaves Black struggling to eliminate White's extra pawn, e.g. 17...♖c5 18 ♜c4 ♜fb8 19 ♜a5 ♜d6 20 ♖e4 ♖xe4 21 ♜xe4 and White is better, Topalov-Korchnoi, Madrid 1996.

15 ♖e4 0-0

The stem game with 13 a4 continued 15...♖e6?! 16 ♙e3 0-0 17 f4 ♜xd1 18 ♜fxd1 ♜fb8 19 ♜d7 and White converted his endgame advantage into

victory in Karpov-Korchnoi, Merano Wch (18) 1981.

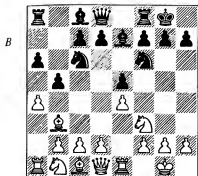
16 axb5 ♖xb5 17 ♙e3 ♜c8 18 ♜d5!?! (D)



Now Chandler-Yusupov, Hastings 1989/90 continued 18...♜d8? 19 ♜c6! and Black was rather tied down. Yusupov suggests 18...♜f5 19 ♖g3 ♜g6 as Black's best chance to equalize.

8 The 8 a4 Anti-Marshall

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♙b5 a6 4 ♙a4
 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♙e7 6 ♚e1 b5 7 ♙b3 0-0 8
 a4 (D)

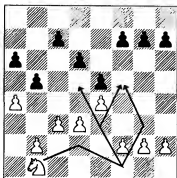


When Vasily Ivanchuk lost a recent game as White in the Marshall Attack against the Dutchman Jan Timman, the Ukrainian grandmaster went as far as saying that 8 c3, allowing the Marshall (8...d5), is a mistake, after which White has to fight for the draw! Of course this is a very over-the-top condemnation of 8 c3, but given that even the world's top players have trouble keeping up with the breakneck speed of Marshall theory, I'm quite pleased to be advocating an anti-Marshall system in this book!

With 8 a4 White brings his a1-rook into the game and immediately puts pressure on the b5-pawn. Thus Marshall-style gambits are more or less

avoided (Black can still try his luck, but by comparison to the real Marshall, ...d5 lines against a4 just don't have the same bite). In this chapter White develops in a more restrained fashion with d3 and ♘bd2-f1. Notice that White need not hurry to play c3, as ...♘a5 can be answered by ♙a2, retaining the bishop along the a2-g8 diagonal. Because White does not play an early d4 advance, Black is under less immediate pressure in the centre. He can use this extra freedom to develop in a number of ways.

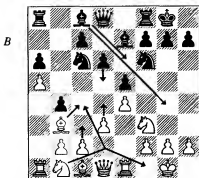
The Lopez Knight Manoeuvre



The arrows show the typical paths available to the b1-knight. The importance of this plan cannot be over-emphasized. When the knight reaches either e3 or g3, it not only influences

the struggle for the centre, it is also ready to hop into more advanced squares such as d5 and f5. In conjunction with White's other pieces, this knight can help White set up attacks on the kingside. Once the knight has moved from d2 to f1, the dark-squared bishop is no longer blocked and is ready to join the action.

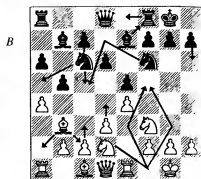
Black Plays ...b4



Here's a typical position that can arise if Black plays an early ...b4. White's last move was 10 a5!, fixing the a6-pawn and also isolating the one on b4. These weaknesses could prove important later on in the game. For example, White often plays ♖c4 to pressurize the a6-pawn. However, it's not all one-way traffic, as the pawn on a5 is a little weak in itself, and so it needs constant attention. Naturally, White can continue with the usual plan of ♜bd2-f1, although the c4-square can also be a useful place for this knight. Later on, of course, White may proceed in the centre with c3 and d4.

For Black's part, he must choose where to place his c8-bishop. The normal squares are e6, where it opposes the Lopez bishop, and g4, pinning the knight. Black also strives to play the freeing ...d5 advance. If White answers this with exd5, then Black achieves the 'Little Centre', but in compensation White has possession of the c4 outpost.

Black Plays ...♗b7



Here's a typical starting position for the 8...♗b7 line. White has already begun the Lopez knight manoeuvre and can hope to profit from the fact that Black's bishop is on b7 by using the f5 outpost for this knight. In conjunction with the Lopez bishop, White can often build up a menacing attack on the kingside like this. Once again White will eventually step up the pressure in the centre with c3 and d4.

Black has many different ways to combat White's strategy. The first is to opt for the usual queenside counterplay with ...♞a5 and ...c5. In some

lines Black can attempt to block out the Lopez bishop with a timely ...c4. Together with this idea, Black can bolster his kingside with moves such as ...♞e8, ...♞f8 and possibly ...h6 (preventing ♖g5 or ♗g5). A different plan consists of ...♞d7-c5, putting pressure on b3 and a4, while allowing Black to overprotect d4 with ...♞f6.

The Theory of the 8 a4 Anti-Marshall

1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4
 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♞e1 b5

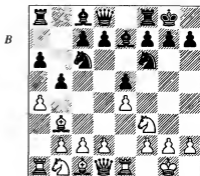
For 6...d6 7 c3 see Chapter 6, Line A.

7 ♗b3 0-0

For the main-line Closed Lopez starting with 7...d6, see Chapters 9-15. As well as 7...0-0, Black can prepare to play another Marshall-style gambit with 7...♗b7, intending to meet 8 c3 with 8...d5!?. After 7...♗b7 8 d3 0-0 White can transpose into the Anti-Marshall with 9 a4, but can also try another approach with 9 ♘c3 d6 10 a3!?. White preserves the bishop on the a2-g8 diagonal and Black can no longer challenge it with ...♗e6. Meanwhile, the knight may go straight to d5, or move to g3 via e2 (this line can be compared favourably to another anti-Marshall which has become popular recently, that is 7...0-0 8 h3!?. ♗b7 9 d3 d6 10 a3, as White hasn't expended a tempo on h3). One possible continuation after 10 a3 runs 10...♞d4 11 ♘xd4 exd4 12 ♘e2 c5 13 ♘g3 d5 14 e5 ♘c8 15 c3 f5 (15...dxc3 16 bxc3 g6

17 d4 ♘g7 18 ♗h6 favoured White in Leko-Am.Rodriguez, Havana 1997) 16 cxd4 cxd4 17 ♖f3 and Black's weak pawns give White a clear plus, Emms-Hebden, British Ch (Plymouth) 1992.

8 a4 (D)



There are three main possibilities:

A: 8...♞b8 83

B: 8...b4 84

C: 8...♗b7 85

I should say at this point that Black can also be really stubborn by continuing in Marshall style with 8...d5!?, but it's quite clear that against this 8 a4 is far more useful than 8 c3. Most moves give White the advantage here. 9 ♗xd5 ♘xd5 10 exd5 ♞d4 11 ♘xd4 exd4 12 axb5 ♗b7 13 c4 dxc3 14 dxc3 axb5 15 ♞xa8 ♗xa8 16 ♖d3 ♗xd5 17 ♖xb5, with a clear extra pawn, de Firmian-I.Sokolov, Amsterdam 1996, looks convincing enough.

A)
 8...♞b8

This is not a very common move. Black still harbours thoughts of playing a Marshall Attack. However, the opening of the a-file means that White gets a far better version than normal.

9 axb5 axb5 10 c3 d5

After 10...d6, White need not prepare the central advance with 11 h3, but can go ahead immediately with 11 d4!. The point is that the standard reply 11...e4 can be met by 12 d5!, winning the knight. Black can exchange on d4 first, but after 11...exd4 12 cxd4 e4 13 e3 d7 14 e3 White's central control gives him an ideal position, Kindermann-Liubarsky, Hamburg 1993.

11 exd5 exd5 12 exe5 exe5 13 exe5 f6!

The main 'Marshall' move here would be 13...c6, but after 14 d4 e6 15 e1 h4 16 g3 h3 17 e3 e4 18 d3, the opening of the a-file gives White an important advantage over the normal Marshall lines. In particular, Black has to watch out for a timely e6, attacking the vulnerable c6-pawn.

14 d4 e6 15 e2! (D)

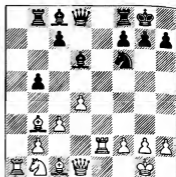
15 e1? gives Black unnecessary chances after 15...e4!, e.g. 16 h3 h4 17 f3 e2!.

After 15 e2 Black has the following possibilities:

a) 15...b4?! 16 d2 b5 17 f1 and White is clearly better.

b) 15...c5!? (Wolff-Fang, New York 1994) and now the simplest solution for White looks to be 16 dxc5! e5 17 d8 xd8 18 e4 e4 19 e1 bc8 20 d2 b4 21 h3 bxc3 22 bxc3, when White has good chances to

B



convert the extra pawn into a full point.

c) 15...e5 16 e3 e6 (16...e4 17 f3 h4 18 g3 e3 19 e2! e3 20 e2! e2 21 e2 wins for White) 17 d2 h4 18 f1 and, with h2 safely protected, Black doesn't have enough play for the pawn.

B)

8...b4

This move is much less popular than 8...e6, but it's not easy for White to prove any advantage against it, as Black does remain very solid.

9 d3

9 d4 is also possible, but the text-move is the most popular.

9...d6 10 a5!

Preventing ...a5 and fixing the a6-pawn, which could become a weakness later on.

10...e6

A more ambitious alternative for Black is 10...e4, preparing ...d4 and ...d5. Now White has:

a) 11 d2?! d4 12 e4 c6 13 h3 f3+ 14 f3 e5 was played in

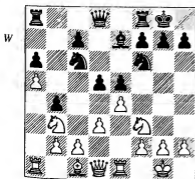
Hraček-I.Sokolov, Pärnu 1996 and now, according to Hraček, White can keep a small advantage with 15 ♖b3!? ♠d7 16 ♖e3 ♜h8 17 g4 ♖g6 18 ♞d2.

b) 11 ♖e3 d5 12 ♜bd2 h6 (threatening ...d4) 13 h3 and now 13...♖h5 14 exd5 ♜xd5 15 ♞e2 (or 15 ♞bl!?) is enough to give White a slight edge, while 13...d4!? 14 hxg4 dxe3 15 fxe3 ♜xg4 16 ♜h2 ♜xh2 17 ♜xh2 ♖g5 18 ♖d5 ♞d7 19 ♞h5 ♞ae8 20 ♜f3 gave White good attacking chances in T.Ravi-Chatterjee, Indian Ch (Kasaragod) 1996. The bishop on d5 is a particularly strong piece.

11 ♜bd2 ♖xb3

After 11...♞b8 12 ♖c4 ♞c8 13 ♜f1, 13...♞e8?! 14 ♜e3 ♜d4 15 ♜xd4 exd4 16 ♜d5 ♜xd5 17 exd5 ♖d7 18 ♖d2 was clearly better for White in Kasparov-Short, London PCA Wch (1) 1993. The a6-pawn here is a real liability. Black can improve on this sequence with 13...♖xc4 but after 14 dxc4 the simple plan of ♜e3-d5 still gives White an edge.

12 ♜xb3 d5!? (D)



This position occurred in Speelman-Smyslov, Biel IZ 1993. After 13 ♞e2 ♞e8 14 ♖g5 h6 15 ♖h4 ♜h5 16 ♖g3 ♜xg3 17 hxg3 ♖f8 18 ♜fd2 ♞d6 Black had equalized. White has other tries, including 13 ♖g5, but in any case, this seems to be a relatively underrated line for Black.

C)

8...♖b7

The most natural and also the most popular choice.

9 d3

This move is all part of the restrained approach. If 9 c3 Black shouldn't hesitate to play in Marshall fashion with 9...d5!

After 9 d3 we now have another major crossroads. Black can play:

C1: 9...♞e8 86

C2: 9...d6 86

Other moves pose fewer problems:

a) 9...♜d4?! 10 ♜xd4 exd4 11 c3 dxc3 12 ♜xc3 b4 13 ♜e2 and White will follow up with ♜g3.

b) 9...d5?! is far too optimistic. White simply grabs the pawn with 10 exd5, e.g. 10...♜d4 11 c4 ♜xb3 12 ♞xb3 ♞b8 13 axb5 axb5 14 ♞d1 and White is clearly better, Tal-Kuzmin, USSR Ch 1972.

c) 9...♜a5 has the idea 10 ♜xe5? ♜xb3 11 cxb3 d5!, when the centre opens up for the black bishops. However, there is no need to be so accommodating. The natural 10 ♖a2! is far stronger. Following 10...d6 White can play 11 ♖d2! c5 (after 11...♜c6 I like 12 ♜a3, when 12...bxa4 13 c3 and

12...b4 13 ♖c4 look promising) 12 ♗xa5 ♗xa5 13 axb5 ♗xb5 (13...♗b6 14 bxa6 ♗xa6 15 ♖a3! ♗xb2 16 ♗c4 ♗aa8 17 ♗b1 and the rook invades on the seventh rank, Matulović-Velimir-ović, Belgrade 1977) 14 ♖bd2 ♗xb2 15 ♗xf7+ ♗xf7 16 ♗b1 ♗a2 17 ♗xb7 and Black has big problems defending all of his light-squared weaknesses.

C1)

9...♗e8

Delaying the advance of the d-pawn, in the hope that it can later be moved to d5 in one go.

10 ♖bd2!?

I should also mention that 10 ♖c3 promises White a small edge, e.g. 10...b4 11 ♖d5 ♖a5 12 ♖xe7+ ♗xe7 13 ♗a2 d5 14 ♗g5 dxe4 15 dxe4 ♗ad8 16 ♗e2 h6 17 ♗h4 and the two bishops are worth a slight pull, Hübner-Zso.Polgar, Biel 1987.

10...♗f8 11 c3 h6

Black has other options:

a) 11...d6 transposes to Line C2.

b) 11...d5 is the most consistent follow-up to Black's play, but after 12 axb5 axb5 13 ♗xa8 ♗xa8 14 exd5 neither 14...♖xd5 15 d4! nor 14...♖a5 15 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 16 ♖xe5 looks satisfactory for Black.

12 ♗a2!

A very subtle move. The main point is that it eliminates ideas of a tempo-gaining ...♖a5.

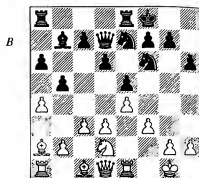
12...d6

Finally settling for just the one square forward. Lunging with 12...d5 only runs into trouble after 13 exd5 ♖xd5 14 d4!

13 ♖h4! ♗d7

Black can also prepare ...d5 with 13...♖e7!?, but after 14 ♖f1! d5 15 ♗f3! ♖h7 16 ♖g3 ♗d7 17 ♖gf5 White's kingside attack is starting to become quite menacing.

14 ♖g6 ♖e7 15 ♖xf8 ♗xf8 16 f3! (D)



This position was reached in Kasparov-Short, London PCA Wch (3) 1993. White has a small but persistent advantage. At the moment Black's position looks quite secure, but White possesses the latent power of the bishop-pair, which will become more important as the position opens up.

C2)

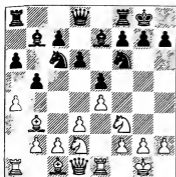
9...d6

The most popular move.

10 ♖bd2 (D)

10 ♖c3 is the old main line, but Kasparov was successful with 10 ♖bd2 in his World Championship match against Short, and since then other top players have followed his lead. White delays the c3 advance so that he can

B



complete the knight manoeuvre more quickly.

Once again Black has a choice of moves:

C21: 10...d7 87

C22: 10...a5 88

Other, less important, tries for Black are:

a) 10...b4!? was played once by Hebden, who is an expert on the black side of the Anti-Marshall. After 11 d1 c5, as played in Nunn-Hebden, Hastings 1993/4, I like the move 12 d2!, e.g. 12...c6 13 e3 c4 14 a2 and Black will have problems maintaining the blocking pawn at c4, while the knight is ready to hop into f5.

b) 10...e8 11 c3 h6 (for 11...a5 12 a2 c5 see Line C22) 12 f1 f8 13 e3 e7!? 14 h4 d7 and now, instead of 15 h3, as in Waters-Hebden, British League (4NCL) 1997/8, I prefer 15 e5!, planning f3, with a powerful attack.

C21)

10...d7 11 c3 c5 12 axb5 axb5

12...xb3? 13 bxc6! xa1 14 cxb7 b8 15 a4 wins material for White.

13 a8 xa8

After 13...xa8 14 c2, 14...f6 15 b4 e6 16 f1 g6 17 e3 g7 18 b3 d8 transposes to the main line, while Kasparov gives 14...b4 15 d4 bxc3 16 bxc3 d7 17 f1 as better for White.

14 c2 f6

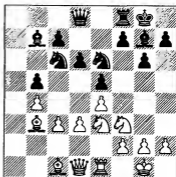
Continuing to strong-point the e5-square and preventing White's d4 advance. Opening the position with 14...d5? is an instructive mistake. After 15 exd5 xd5 16 d4! exd4 17 cxd4 d7 18 e4 d6 19 c2 White wins material following either 19...b4 20 xh7+ h8 21 f5 or 19...h6 20 xc6! xc6 21 xe7.

15 b4 e6 16 f1 b7

Black plans to bring the bishop back into play via c8. Both 16...e7 17 e3 g6 18 g4 and 16...d5!? 17 exd5 xd5 18 e3 d8 19 g4 fail to alter the general assessment of the position.

17 e3 g6 18 b3 g7 (D)

W



This position was reached in Kasparov-Short, London PCA Wch (7) 1993. Kasparov kept an edge with 19 h4!?, planning to soften up the black kingside with h5. In his notes to the game, however, Kasparov felt that 19 ♖c2!, planning d4, was even stronger.

C22)

10...♖a5 11 ♖a2 c5 12 ♖f1

12 c3 is also important due to transpositions. Following 12...♞e8 13 ♖f1 we have:

a) 13...c4!? 14 ♖g5 h6 15 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 16 ♖e3 ♞c8 17 axb5 axb5 18 dxc4 ♖xc4 19 ♖xc4 bxc4 20 ♖d2 ♖g5 21 ♖exc4 d5 and the bishop-pair gives Black some compensation for the pawn, Klingner-Nunn, Biel 1986.

b) 13...h6 14 ♖e3 and now:

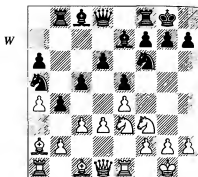
b1) 14...♖f8 15 b4 cxb4 16 cxb4 ♖c6 17 ♖d5 ♖xd5 18 ♖xd5 ♞d7 19 ♞b3 bxa4 20 ♞xa4 ♞ed8 21 ♖d2 ♖e7 22 ♞xd7 ♞xd7 and now 23 ♖xb7 ♞xb7 was equal in Kindermann-Adams, Garmisch 1994, but 23 ♖c4! keeps pressure on the black position.

b2) 14...♞d7 15 b4 cxb4 16 cxb4 ♖c6 17 ♖d2 ♖f8 18 ♖d5 (18 axb5!? axb5 19 ♖d5 ♖xd5 20 ♖xd5 ♞xa1 21 ♞xa1 ♞a8 22 ♞c3 may give White an edge) 18...♖xd5 19 ♖xd5 ♖e7 20 ♖xb7 ♞xb7 21 d4 bxa4 22 ♞xa4 exd4 23 ♖xd4 ♖g6 with equality, Onishchuk-Adams, Bundesliga 1996/7.

12...b4 13 ♖e3 ♖c8

This line can be compared quite favourably with 10 ♖c3 ♖a5 11 ♖a2 b4 12 ♖e2 ♞b8 13 ♖g3 c5 14 ♖f5 ♖c8 15 ♖e3 ♖e6, as played in Anand-Short, Amsterdam 1992. Here White is two tempi ahead, having taken only three moves to plant the knight on e3. In a semi-closed position the loss of time is not a disaster for Black, but it's still enough to give White a persistent edge.

14 c3 ♞b8 (D)

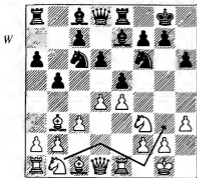


Now 15 cxb4 ♞xb4 16 ♖d2 ♞b8 17 ♖c3 ♖c6 18 ♖d2 ♖e6 was equal in Ivkov-Xie Jun, Vienna 1993, so maybe White should try 15 ♖c4!?, e.g. 15...♖xc4 (15...♖e6?! 16 ♖xa5! ♞xa5 17 ♖xe6 fxe6 18 cxb4 ♞xb4 19 ♖g5 and the e6-pawn drops) 16 ♖xc4 a5 17 d4 bxc3 18 bxc3 cxd4 19 cxd4 ♖b7 20 d5 and White keeps a small advantage.

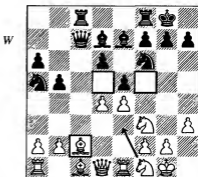
9 Ideas in the Closed Lopez

Before moving on to the individual variations of the Closed Lopez, we should take a brief look at some of the more important positional ideas for both White and Black. Although the variations can lead to a diversity of different types of positions, there are still many familiar motifs running through all the lines.

The Lopez Knight Manoeuvre



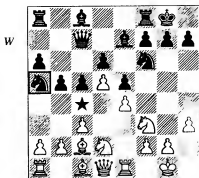
The above position is from the Smyslov Variation (9...h6). Without a doubt White's most popular continuation here is to play 11 Nbd2! , followed by 12 Qf1 and 13 Qg3 . We have seen this before, and we'll see it again! On g3 the knight gives valuable support to the e4-pawn and is ready to assist in a later kingside assault by moving to f5.



This position can arise from the Chigorin Defence. Here White plays 15 Qe3! , protecting the c2-bishop and eyeing the important f5 and d5 posts.

Black's Offside Knight

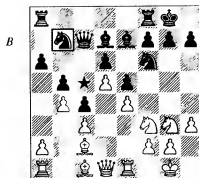
The problem of the offside knight arises chiefly in the Chigorin Defence (9... Qa5). Black originally plays the move to gain a tempo on the Lopez bishop and to enable him to make the advance ...c5. However, Black often has to spend several tempi reintroducing the knight into the action. Worse still, the knight may become a real liability, achieving nothing in itself and also getting in the way of Black's other pieces. White can sometimes invest lots of time just to make sure the knight remains inactive. Here's an instructive example of White adopting this policy.



Geller - Mecking

Palma de Mallorca IZ 1970

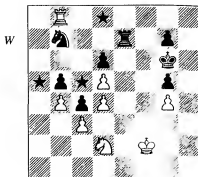
Here Geller started the restraint procedure with **14 b3!**, not allowing the a5-knight to jump into c4 once the d2-knight has moved to f1. After **14...♗d7 15 ♖f1** Mecking tried to activate his knight another way with **15...♗b7 16 ♘g3 c4**, only to be foiled again by the excellent move **17 b4!** (D).



Now the knight remains a miserable piece on b7. Its only route to any

activity would be via d8 to f7, but to do this Black would have to move his f6-knight and his f7-pawn, so this manoeuvre needs lots of preparation and is rather cumbersome.

The knight can remain a liability right into the endgame. Here's a particularly shocking example.



Emms - Mirallès

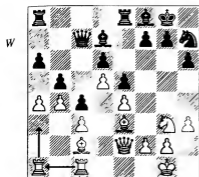
Andorra Z 1998

Not only does the black knight have no future, it also has to be protected by Black's only other piece. After **44 ♖b1!**, intending ♖a3 and ♖xb5, my opponent found no reason to continue the struggle.

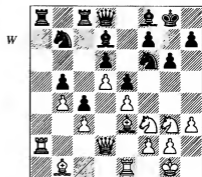
White Uses the a-file

After an initial a4 advance, White can sometimes benefit by a direct assault down the a-file. This can be particularly effective if the position remains blocked elsewhere.

The position on the following page arose from the Smyslov Variation. Here the computer shows it has positional



Deep Blue – Kasparov
New York (2) 1997



Karpov – Unzicker
Nice OL 1974

subtlety to go with its awesome calculating ability.

24 ♖a3! ♜ec8 25 ♜ca1!

Black will always have to be concerned about White opening the a-file and penetrating with his rooks. Even Kasparov could not come up with a suitable defensive plan.

25... ♜d8 26 f4 ♘f6 27 fxe5 dxe5 28 ♜f1 ♘e8 29 ♜f2 ♘d6 30 ♖b6 ♜e8 31 ♜3a2 ♖e7 32 ♖c5 ♖f8 33 ♘f5 ♖xf5 34 exf5 f6 35 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 36 axb5 axb5 37 ♖e4 ♜xa2 38 ♜xa2 ♜d7 39 ♜a7 ♜c7 40 ♜b6

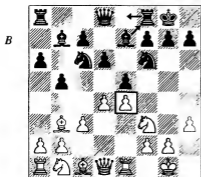
The computer has comfortably arrived at an overwhelming position.

The following position arose from the Chigorin Defence. Black would like to relieve the pressure by multiple exchanges down the a-file. Karpov came up with an inspired way to prevent this. After the clever blocking move **24 ♖a7!** Black remains forever cramped and White can build up on

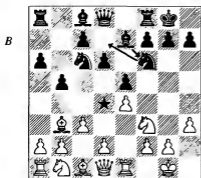
the a-file at leisure. The rest of the game is quite instructive, with Karpov combining potential threats down the a-file with opening another attacking front on the kingside. After **24... ♘e8 25 ♖c2 ♘c7 26 ♜ea1 ♜e7 27 ♖b1 ♖e8 28 ♘e2 ♘d8 29 ♘h2 ♖g7 30 f4! f6 31 f5 g5 32 ♖c2 ♖f7 33 ♘g3 ♘b7 34 ♖d1 h6 35 ♖h5 ♜e8 36 ♜d1 ♘d8 37 ♜a3 ♜f8 38 ♜1a2 ♜g8 39 ♘g4 ♜f8 40 ♘e3 ♜g8 41 ♖xf7+ ♘xf7 42 ♜h5 ♘d8 43 ♜g6 ♜f8 44 ♘h5** Unzicker threw in the towel. Black's position at the end is a rather sorry sight!

Black Reinforces the e5-pawn

The theoretical position at the top of the following page arises in the Zaitsev Variation. Black's most popular continuation here is **10... ♜e8! 11 ♘bd2 ♖f8**. Now the e5-pawn has added protection and the black rook also bears down on White's e4-pawn. The f8-bishop may be reintroduced



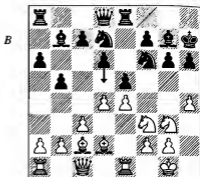
via a fianchetto with ...g6, which would help to bolster Black's king position. Black also often plays ...h6, to prevent any annoying Bg5 and Bg5 ideas from White.



In the Karpov Variation Black reinforces c5 in a different way. After $9... \text{d7}$ 10 d4 Bf6 it's the dark-squared bishop that does the work, defending c5 and also putting pressure on the d4-pawn, thus attempting to resolve the tension in the centre. White may relieve the pressure by playing d5.

Black Breaks with ...d5

Not a common occurrence, but if White neglects to keep sufficient control over the central squares then Black can sometimes react aggressively.



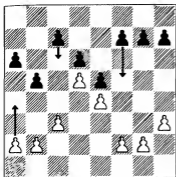
Smirin - Beliavsky

USSR Ch (Odessa) 1989

Here White has gone for a crude kingside attack. Beliavsky retaliated in classical style with $18... \text{d5!}$ 19 exd5 exd4 20 Qxd4 (20 h5! is more consistent) $20... \text{Qe5!}$ 21 Qe6 Wxd5 22 Qf4 Wc6 and Black went on to win in fine style.

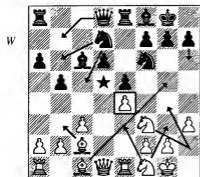
White Plays an Early d5

This idea (see diagram on following page) is frequently seen in our study of the Zaitsev and Karpov systems. White deliberately blocks the centre, leading to a phase of slow manoeuvring. Just concentrating on the pawn breaks, White may try a4, increasing the pressure on Black's queenside pawns. Black's two possible pawn breaks are ...c6 and ...f5. The former is



by far the most popular option, as it's usually far easier to carry out.

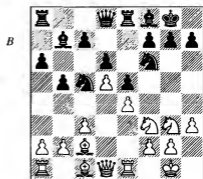
Black Breaks with ...c6



Here's a typical position, which could arise after Black answers White's early d5 with ...c6 and White exchanges on c6. The following play is based very much around the central squares, and in particular, the e4- and d5-squares. White will attempt to dominate the d5-square with moves such as ♖b3, ♕g5, ♗e3 and even ♗h2-g4. Black meanwhile will also

try to control d5, and at the same time keep White busy defending the e4-pawn. This can be achieved by moves such as ...♗c5/b6, ...♜c8/c7-b7 and ...h6 (preventing ♕g5). If Black gains enough control over d5, he may contemplate opening the position with ...d5. On one hand this liberates the bishop on f8, but on the other hand it also frees White's c2-bishop.

Often after White plays d5, the timing of Black's response ...c6 is crucial.

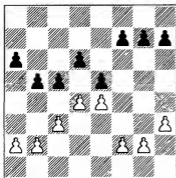


Short – Timman
El Escorial Ct (10) 1993

Here Black is in a prime position to play 15...c6 and in fact this is the theoretical move. Instead Timman delayed with 15...a5 16 ♗h2 g6 17 ♜f3 h5 18 ♕e3 ♗fd7 19 ♚ad1 ♜e7 20 ♗gf1 ♕g7 21 ♕c1. Here Black should probably continue with 21...a4. After Timman's 21...c6?, however, Short showed he was ready for the break. The game continued 22 b4! axb4 23 cxb4 ♗a4 24 dxc6 ♕xc6 25 ♕b3! ♚ad8 26 ♜g3 ♗f8 27 ♗f3 ♗e6 28 ♗g5 ♗xg5 29

♙xg5 ♜f6 30 ♙xf6 ♜xf6 31 ♜d3 and White had won the battle of the central squares. Following 31...h4? 32 ♜f3! hxg3 33 ♜xf6 gxh2+ 34 ♜xf2 ♜e7 35 ♜xg6+ Short won a pawn and very soon the game.

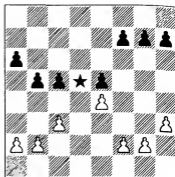
Black Plays ...c5



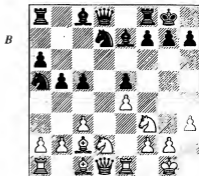
This important advance is mainly seen in the Chigorin and Breyer Variations. Black simultaneously exerts more pressure on the d4-pawn and harmonizes his own pawn-chain, making more space for his pieces to move from the kingside to the queenside and vice-versa. Apart from keeping the tension, there are two possible ways that White can react to this advance. He can exchange with dxe5 or dxc5 or he can push with d5.

White Exchanges on c5 or e5

This particular strategy was a favourite of Bobby Fischer's. After the exchange of pawns Black has just as much space as White, but White can hope to profit by making use of the



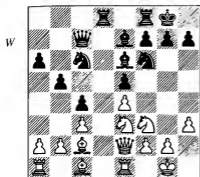
d5-outpost. This plan can prove very powerful if Black does not respond precisely.



Fischer – Keres Curaçao Ct 1962

In this position 13...f6 is probably Black's best move. Instead Keres played the plausible 13...♜c7? and following 14 ♘f1 ♘b6 15 ♖e3! ♜d8 16 ♜e2 ♙e6 17 ♘d5! ♘xd5 18 exd5 ♙xd5 19 ♖xe5 the potential in White's position was released. Following 19...♞a7 20 ♙f4 ♜b6 21 ♜ad1 Fischer had

built up an irresistible attack, against which the Estonian grandmaster was unable to defend.

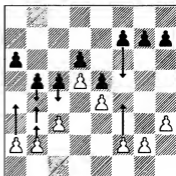


Fischer – Kholmov
Havana 1965

Here Fischer's opponent is better prepared to defend the d5-square. After 17 $\text{d}5$ h6! 18 dxe6 fxe6 Black's doubled e-pawns protect some vital squares and give Black a fully equal position.

White Pushes with d5

By waiting for Black to play ...c5 and only then advancing with d5, White avoids the possibility of an attack at the head of the pawn-chain with ...c6. Play now revolves around various subtle piece manoeuvres and pawn moves. For example, Black will often attempt to play ...c4, in order to obtain a post for a knight on c5, which from there could even hop into the d3-square.



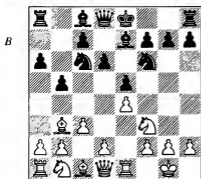
White may try to deny Black this idea with an earlier b3, planning to answer ...c4 with b4. As we saw earlier, this can be a particularly effective plan if Black has a knight on b7.

As we have seen before, White may also attack on the queenside with a4. If Black answers this with ...b4, then White can either exchange on b4 and try to take control of the c-file, or else block the queenside completely with c4 and turn his attention to the other wing.

As far as play on the kingside goes, Black can attack the base of the pawn-chain with ...f5, although usually this requires a great deal of preparation. Likewise, White may himself attack with f4. If Black exchanges with ...exf4, then he obtains the e5-square as an outpost, but the backward d6-pawn could be subject to attack. If Black has pushed with ...c4, then White would also have use of the d4 outpost.

10 Rare Closed Lopez Variations

1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♘c6 3 ♜b5 a6 4 ♜a4
 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♜e7 6 ♞e1 b5 7 ♜b3 d6 8
 c3 (D)



8...0-0

Black can aim immediately for a Chigorin set-up after 8...♘a5 9 ♜c2 c5, but the drawback of this move-order is that Black has less pressure on d4, so White can do without the usual h3. After 10 d4! ♞c7 11 a4! b4 (if 11...♞b8, 12 axb5 axb5 13 dxe5 dxe5 14 ♘xe5! wins a pawn, while 11...0-0 12 axb5 axb5 13 b4 wins even more) 12 cxb4 cxb4 13 ♘bd2 0-0 14 b3 ♜g4 15 ♜b2 ♘c6 16 h3 ♜xf3 17 ♘xf3, White has a very pleasant position.

9 h3

This modest move is an important link in White's plans, and has been

considered the main line for a very long time. White rules out the pinning move that would be effective after 9 d4, viz. 9...♜g4! (although this remains a playable line for White).

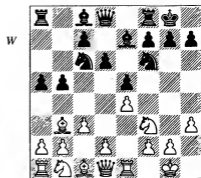
In this chapter we will deal with two of Black's less popular replies to 9 h3:

- A: 9...a5 96
 B: 9...♜e6 97

Note that 9...♞e8 is also possible, as after 10 d4 ♜b7 we have reached the Zaitsev Variation (see Chapter 12).

A)

9...a5 (D)



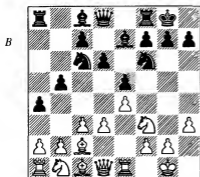
This unusual move was briefly popular in the late 1980s. Black is ready to

exchange the Lopez bishop if White carries on as normal with 10 d4, but White can keep the advantage by playing in a more restrained manner.

10 d3

10 d4 allows Black to carry out his idea. After 10...exd4! 11 cxd4 a4 12 ♖c2 ♜b4 13 ♜c3 ♜xc2 14 ♜xc2 c6 the position is roughly level, Kronig-Gostiša, Finkenstein 1994.

10...a4 11 ♖c2 (D)



11...♗d7

Black has to be careful with his far-flung a-pawn. After the casual 11...♞e8 Black is punished by 12 c4!, when suddenly Black is in trouble, e.g. 12...bxc4 13 ♗xa4 ♗b7 14 dxc4 or 12...♜b4 13 cxb5 ♜xc2 14 ♜xc2 ♗d7 15 ♜c3. In either case White is a pawn to the good.

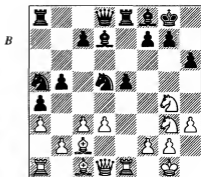
12 ♜bd2 ♞e8

12...♜b8?! is too slow. After 13 d4 ♜b7 14 ♜f1 exd4 15 cxd4 ♜b4 16 ♗b1 ♞ad8 17 ♜g3 ♞fc8 18 ♗d2 ♜a6 19 e5 White had a very potent attack in Ehlvest-P.Nikolić, Reykjavik 1988.

13 ♜f1 h6

White also keeps an advantage after 13...♗f8 14 ♜g3 g6 15 d4 ♗g7 16 ♗g5 h6 17 ♗c3 followed by ♜d2.

14 a3 ♜a5 15 ♜g3 ♗f8 16 ♜h2 d5 17 exd5 ♜xd5 18 ♜g4 (D)



Smagin-Hebden, Hastings Masters 1990 continued 18...♗xg4 19 ♜xg4 ♞a6 20 ♗d2 ♜f6 21 ♜f3 ♞ae6 22 ♞ad1 with a small plus for White.

B)

9...♗e6

Black offers the exchange of the light-squared bishops, hoping that this will reduce White's attacking capabilities.

10 d4 ♗xb3 11 axb3 exd4

This is the modern way to play the position. Older tries grant White too much space, e.g.:

a) 11...♞e8 12 d5 ♜b8 13 c4 c6 14 ♜d3 b4 15 ♗d2!? c5 16 ♗e3 ♜bd7 17 ♜bd2 was better for White in Pskhis-Smagin, Protvino 1988.

b) 11...♜d7 12 d5 ♜d8 13 c4 c6 14 ♜c3 cxd5 15 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 16 ♜xd5 ♜c6 17 ♗d2 and Black has various

weaknesses, Aronin-Kholmov, USSR Ch 1957.

12 cxd4 d5 13 e5 ♖e4

After 13...♗d7 the spearhead e5-pawn gives White an excellent attacking platform. Smirin-Stempin, Polanica Zdroj 1989 went 14 ♖c3 ♗b4 15 ♖e2 ♜e8 16 ♗g3 c5 17 ♗f5 ♙f8 18 ♗g5 h6 19 ♗xf7! ♗xf7 20 ♖h5+ ♗g8 21 ♖g6 with a decisive attack.

14 ♖c3 f5

14...♙b4? runs into 15 ♗xe4! ♙xe1 16 ♗eg5, e.g. 16...h6 17 ♖c2 hxg5 18 ♗xg5 g6 19 ♖xc6 ♙b4 20 e6!, when Black is in big trouble.

15 exf6 ♙xf6

This pawn sacrifice is Black's sharpest try. 15...♗xf6 16 ♙g5 gives White a safe advantage, with Black having many weak squares on the c- and e-files.

16 ♗xe4 dxe4 17 ♜xe4 ♖d5 18 ♙g4 h5

Other moves include:

a) 18...♗b4 19 ♙g5 ♜ad8 20 ♖d2 c5 21 ♖c3 and White is just a clear pawn up, J.Howell-Bjornsson, Reykjavik 1990.

b) 18...♗e7 19 ♙h6! ♗f5 20 ♙g5 h5 (20...♙xg5 21 ♜xg5 h6 22 ♙g4 is better for White) 21 ♜f4 ♙xg5 22 ♗xg5 ♗xd4 23 ♜xf8+ ♜xf8 24 ♖xh5 ♖f5 25 ♖h4! ♗e2+ and now 26 ♗h2? allows Black a neat trick leading to a draw, i.e. 26...♖e5+ 27 ♗h1 ♜xf2!! 28 ♜d1! ♜f1+!! 29 ♜xf1 ♗g3+ 30 ♗g1 ♖e3+ 31 ♜f2 ♖e1+ 32 ♗h2 ♗f1+!,

but 26 ♗h1! leaves Black just a pawn down.

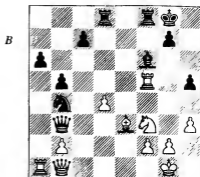
19 ♜f4 ♜ad8

19...g5? 20 ♗xg5! ♙xg5 (20...♖xg5 is met by 21 ♜g4!) 21 ♖xh5 leaves Black with no good defence.

20 ♙e3 ♗b4

Or 20...g5 21 ♜xf6! ♜xf6 22 ♙xg5, winning back the exchange with another pawn to boot.

21 ♖b1 ♖xb3 22 ♜f5 (D)



Black's weak kingside offers White very good chances, e.g.:

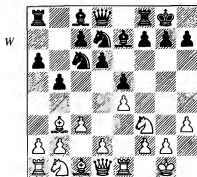
a) 22...g6 23 ♜g5!.

b) 22...♖c2 23 ♖xc2 ♗xc2 24 ♜xa6 ♜fe8 25 ♙g5 ♙xg5 26 ♜xg5 ♗xd4 27 ♗xd4 ♜xd4 28 ♜c6! and White went on to win this endgame in Anand-Adams, Linares PCA Ct (3) 1994.

c) 22...♗c2!? (probably best) 23 ♜xa6 ♗xe3 24 fxe3 ♖xe3+ 25 ♗h1 and White's active rooks give him the advantage.

11 The Karpov Variation

1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♘c6 3 ♙b5 a6 4 ♙a4
 ♜f6 5 0-0 ♙e7 6 ♚e1 b5 7 ♙b3 d6 8
 c3 0-0 9 h3 ♘d7 (D)



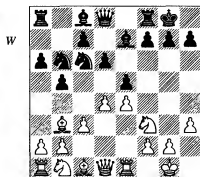
This move has been known for a long time and was recently brought back into the limelight when it was employed four times by Anatoly Karpov in his 1990 World Championship match with Kasparov. One of Black's main ideas is to support the e5-pawn with ...♙f6, which at the same time puts pressure on White's d4-pawn. Meanwhile the d7-knight may move to b6, where it discourages White from playing a4 and may help Black to start operations on the queenside.

10 d4

Now we will look at two continuations for Black:

- A: 10...♘b6 99
 B: 10...♙f6 101

A)
 10...♘b6 (D)



Championed by Borislav Ivkov, this move can also be found in the games of Boris Spassky, and, more recently, Michael Adams. By immediately transferring his king's knight to the queenside, Black dissuades White from playing the a4 break. Moreover, Black is now ready to start operations himself on this wing. On the other hand, with both knights on the queenside, Black's king has less defensive cover, and therefore White should concentrate his forces on the relatively undefended kingside.

11 ♘bd2

At this point Black has two major options:

- A1: 11...exd4 100
 A2: 11...♙f6 101

A1)**11...exd4**

With this move Black gives up his foothold in the centre in exchange for immediate queenside counterplay. Play can now become extremely sharp.

12 cxd4 ♖b4

12...d5 is not so effective. After 13 ♙c2 ♙e6 14 e5 ♚d7 15 ♜b3 ♙f5 16 ♙g5 White offers an exchange of bishops that would highlight Black's problems on the dark squares, Fischer-Reshevsky, Santa Monica 1966.

13 ♜f1 c5 14 a3 ♜c6 15 ♙e3 ♜a5

A more recent (and perhaps more critical) try is 15...c4!? 16 ♙c2 d5, obtaining a serious clamp on the queenside. This puts some pressure on White, who cannot afford to delay actions on the kingside. Topalov-Peng Xiaomin, Elista OL 1998 continued 17 ♜e5 ♚c7 18 ♜g3 g6 19 ♚f3 ♙e6 20 ♜xc6 ♚xc6 21 ♙h6 ♚fe8 22 e5 and we are in the middle of a typical asymmetrical battle.

16 ♙c2 ♜bc4 17 ♙c1

At the moment it looks as if the black knights are having more fun than the white bishops, but in reality the knights are struggling to find suitable outposts and White is ready to kick one out with a timely b3.

17...cxd4 18 ♜xd4 ♙f6 19 ♚b1

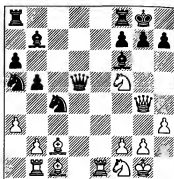
Elegant prophylaxis. After the immediate 19 b3, 19...♚b6! puts White in a rather awkward situation.

After the text-move, White is ready to meet 19...♚b6 with 20 ♜f3, e.g. 20...♙b7 21 b3 ♜e5 22 ♙e3 ♚c7 23 ♜d4! ♚ac8 24 ♜g3 ♚fe8 25 ♚c1 and the white pieces are more alive.

19...d5 20 exd5 ♙b7 21 ♜f5 ♚xd5 22 ♚g4 (D)

22 ♚xd5 is also not bad, but it seems sensible to keep the queens on the board when there are so many attacking possibilities.

B



Looking at the diagram, we can see that both sides can boast about dynamic piece-play, but the key here is the position of the knights. Since White will be attacking the black king with queen, rook and all four of his minor pieces, Black will sorely miss the defensive powers of his own knights, the ones grazing on the queenside. Adams-Ivkov, French Cht 1991 proves the point quite effectively. After 22...h5 23 ♚g3 ♚fe8 24 ♙g5 ♙e5 25 f4 ♙d4+ 26 ♜h2 ♜c6 (the offside knight hurries back to the action, but it's too late for Black's beleaguered defences) 27 ♚bd1 g6 28 ♙f6! White's kingside attack quickly became quite overwhelming.

Black has to look for alternatives here and a good start would be with 15...c4!?

A2)

11...♙f6

A much more solid continuation than 11...exd4. Now that Black has prevented a4, he sets about bolstering the kingside and putting pressure on the d4-pawn.

12 ♖f1 ♜e8 13 ♞h2!

I like this move. From h2 the knight is ready to hop to g4, when Black will be forced to concede one of his bishops. As 13...g6 14 ♖g4 ♙g7 15 ♙g5 is hardly appealing, Black is forced into immediate central action.

13...exd4 14 cxd4 ♖a5 15 ♙c2 c5 16 b3

16 ♖g4 is also good, e.g. 16...♙xg4 17 hxg4 cxd4 18 g5 ♙e5 19 ♖xd4 g6 20 f4 ♙g7 (Smirin-Balashov, USSR Ch (Odessa) 1989) and now I approve of the simple 21 b3, intending ♙b2.

16...♖c6

16...cxd4 17 ♖xd4 d5 can be answered effectively by 18 e5! ♙xe5 19 ♙xh7+ ♖xh7 20 ♜h5+ ♖g8 21 ♜xe5, when White has virtually a free hand on the kingside. Notice how redundant the black knights are looking – it sure is a long way back to the other wing.

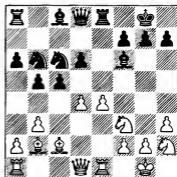
17 ♙b2 (D)

White is all set up for some weighty central thrusting. All lines give White at least a small advantage, e.g.:

a) 17...cxd4 18 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 19 ♙xd4 ♙b7 20 ♖g4 ♙xd4 21 ♜xd4 and the isolated d6-pawn will soon come under heavy fire.

b) 17...g6 18 e5 dxe5 19 dxc5 ♖d7 20 ♙e4 ♙b7 21 b4 and, amongst other things, the protected passed pawn on c5 causes Black major problems.

B



c) 17...♜a7!? 18 e5! dxe5 19 dxc5 ♖d5 20 ♖g4 ♙xg4 21 hxg4 g6 22 ♖d2 ♖db4 23 ♖e4 ♖xc2 24 ♜xc2 and White's pieces are more harmoniously placed, Popović-Salov, Manila IZ 1990.

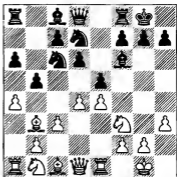
B)

10...♙f6

The main move. Black immediately bolsters the e5-pawn and at the same time exerts pressure on d4. Indeed, normal development with 11 ♖bd2? would now simply lose a pawn.

11 a4! (D)

B



Immediately putting the question to Black about what to do with the b-pawn. There are three possible answers:

B1: 11...♖b8 102

B2: 11...♖a5 102

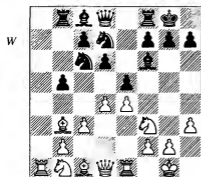
B3: 11...♗b7 103

B1)

11...♖b8

Protecting the b5-pawn, but giving up the a-file. This move is not seen very often, but it's not bad, just a little passive.

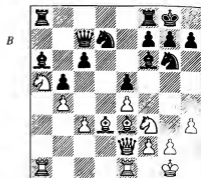
12 axb5 axb5 (D)



13 ♗e3

13 d5 is also possible, e.g. 13...♗e7 14 ♖bd2 ♗g6 (14...c6?! is too early, as after 15 dxc6 ♗xc6 16 ♖f1 ♗c5 17 ♗d5 ♗e7 18 ♗e3 the d5-square is firmly in White's possession; however, 14...♗c5!? 15 ♗c2 b4 or simply 14...b4!? is worth a look) 15 ♖f1 ♗h4 16 ♗h2 ♗xf3+ 17 ♗xf3 and White has a characteristic space dominance, J.Polgar-Van der Sterren, Wijk aan Zee 1990.

13...♗e7 14 ♖bd2 ♗b7 15 ♗c2 ♗a8 16 ♗e2 c6 17 dxe5 dxe5 18 b4 ♗c7 19 ♗b3 ♗g6 20 ♗a5 ♗a6 21 ♗d3 (D)



Ki.Georgiev-Karpov, Reggio Emilia 1989/90. White's position is easier to play, and Black must be wary of the cramping effect of the white knight on a5. Trying to break out with 21...♗f4 backfires after 22 ♗xf4 exf4 23 e5! ♗fe8 24 ♗e4, hitting h7 and c6.

B2)

11...♖a5 12 ♗c2 ♗b6

Black's problem is that the natural 12...c5 runs into 13 axb5 axb5 14 b4, exploiting the pin on the knight and winning a piece. Also good for White is 12...♗b7 13 d5 ♗c4 14 b3 ♗cb6 15 a5 ♗c8 16 b4 c6 17 dxc6 ♗xc6 18 ♖bd2, when Black's numerous knight moves have just left the knights on very passive squares, Balashov-Furman, USSR Ch 1976.

The text-move deals with White's threat of 13 axb5, but allows White some queenside expansion.

13 b4! ♖ac4 14 a5 ♘d7 15 ♙b3
exd4 16 cxd4 c5 17 ♙f4! cxb4

Play now becomes very sharp, but the two central pawns give White the trump cards. 17...cxd4 18 ♙xc4 bxc4 19 ♙xd6 d3 20 e5 ♙e7 21 ♖a3 is good for White according to Fischer. After 21...c3 22 ♙e3! the black pawns drop off.

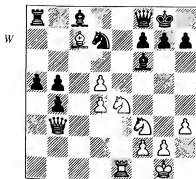
18 ♖bd2 d5

After 18...♖xa5 the simple 19 ♙xd6 looks good, while White can also consider 19 ♙xa5!? ♗xa5 20 ♙xd6, when Black is faced with an awesome attack, for example 20...♙e8 21 e5 ♙e7 22 e6!.

19 exd5 ♖xa5 20 ♙d6 ♖xb3 21 ♗xb3 ♙e8 22 ♙c7! ♙xe1+ 23 ♙xe1 ♗f8

The stem game in this line was Fischer-Matanović, Vinkovci 1968, when Black played 23...♗xc7, but after 24 ♙e8+ ♖f8 25 ♗xb4 ♙e7 26 ♙xe7 ♗d8 27 ♖e5 ♖g6 28 ♖c6 ♗f8 29 ♗c5 a5 30 ♙c7 ♗e8 31 d6 White's d-pawn was just too strong.

24 ♖e4 a5 (D)



Black has three dangerous-looking passed pawns on the queenside, but even so, White's active pieces and central dominance are the most important factors. Fischer gave 25 ♖d6 a4! 26 ♗xb4 ♙e7 27 ♖e5 ♖xe5 28 dxe5 ♙d7 with equality, but in Chandler-P.Nikolić, Linares 1988, White came up with the powerful novelty 25 ♗d3!. Now lines such as 25...♙b7 26 ♗xb5 and 25...♙a6 26 ♙xa5 just go to show what a bind Black finds himself in. Nikolić tried 25...a4, but following 26 ♙d6 ♗d8 27 ♙xb4 ♙a6 28 ♖d6 ♗c7 29 ♗f5 White's initiative proved too much. Black urgently requires something new here; otherwise 11...♖a5 looks distinctly unplayable.

B3)

11...♙b7

The most popular reply. Black develops and connects his queen and rook. White's basic plan is to assault the b5-pawn, but first he must choose whether to close the centre or keep a fluid structure.

B31: 12 d5 103

B32: 12 ♖a3 104

B31)

12 d5 ♖e7

12...♖a5 13 ♙c2 transposes to Line B2, note to Black's 12th move.

13 axb5 axb5 14 ♙xa8 ♗xa8

This is the most natural recapture. After 14...♙xa8 15 ♖a3 Black has problems keeping hold of the b5-pawn, e.g.:

a) 15...♗b8 16 ♖xb5! c6 (the none too subtle point behind White's last

move is 16...♖xb5 17 ♔a4!, while 16...♖c5 17 ♔c4 ♕d8 18 ♖a3 c6 19 ♔a2 cxd5 20 exd5 left Black without enough compensation for the pawn in Mokry-Votava, Czech Cht 1994/5) 17 dxc6 ♔xc6. This was seen in Kindermann-Sturua, Biel 1991 and after 18 ♖a3 ♖c5 19 ♔c2 d5 20 exd5 ♖xd5 21 ♖c4 e4 22 ♖d4 ♔a8 Black had some (although probably not enough) compensation for the pawn. It also has to be mentioned that 18 ♖xd6 looks good, as after 18...♖c5 19 ♔xf7+! ♕xf7 20 ♖xf7 ♖xf7 21 ♖g5+ ♔xg5 22 ♔xg5 White's rook and three pawns should be stronger than the two minor pieces. It's true that Black can snatch a pawn back with 22...♖xe4, but then 23 ♔xe7 ♖xe7 24 ♖h5! looks very dangerous.

b) 15...♖c5 16 ♔c2 c6 17 b4 ♖a6 18 dxc6 ♔xc6 19 ♖d3 ♖c7 (White can meet 19...♖b8 with 20 ♖d4! exd4 21 e5) 20 ♕d1 ♖a8 21 ♖xd6 ♖e6 22 ♖d3 and White can attack the weak pawns on b5 and d6, Hübner-Short, Skellefteå World Cup 1989.

15 ♖a3 ♔a6 16 ♔e3

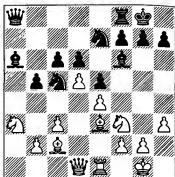
White can also begin kingside manoeuvres with 16 ♖h2, e.g. 16...♖g6 17 ♖g4 ♔e7 18 ♖e3 ♕b8 19 ♔d2 ♖c5 20 ♔c2 ♔c8 21 ♖f5 ♔f8 22 ♖f3 with an edge to White, Popović-Blagojević, Nikšić 1997.

16...♖c5

Sensibly kicking the bishop back to c2. Breaking with 16...c6? is a move too early, as after 17 dxc6 ♖xc6 18 ♖c2! Black will be embarrassed by ♖b4.

17 ♔c2 c6 (D)

W



Black has achieved the desired ...c6 break, but once again this only signals the start of the real middlegame action.

18 b4 ♖d7 19 c4!? bxc4 20 ♔a4

Svidler-Gabriel, Bad Homburg 1998 now continued 20...♔b7?! 21 ♖xc4 cxd5 22 ♖xd6 dxe4 23 ♖h2 and White built up a dangerous initiative (Svidler also gives 23 ♖xb7 ♖xb7 24 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 25 ♔xd7 exf3 26 gxf3, when White's passed b-pawn provides him with excellent winning chances in the endgame).

According to Svidler, Black should sacrifice a piece with 20...cxd5! 21 ♔xd7 d4!, when 22 ♔c1 c3 23 b5 ♔b7 leaves Black with an impressive pawn phalanx, while bailing out with 22 ♖xd4!? exd4 23 ♔xd4 ♔xd4 24 ♖xd4 ♔c8! 25 ♔xc8 ♖xa3 26 ♔g4 ♖xb4 27 ♕c1 leads to equality.

B32)

12 ♖a3

This move became popular after Kasparov chose it in his 1990 World Championship clash with Karpov. By

refusing to close the centre immediately, White keeps more options open, although Black too has more ways to generate counterplay.

12...exd4

12...♖b6 has been played a few times, chiefly by Varavin. The idea is that after 13 d5 ♖e7 14 axb5 axb5 15 ♙e3 Black sacrifices a pawn with 15...c6!?. It seems to me that Black has reasonable play after 16 dxc6 ♙xc6 17 ♙xb6 ♖xb6 18 ♖xd6 ♜fd8 19 ♖b4 ♖b7, and certainly Varavin has repeated this line on several occasions, so it must be treated with some respect. In Dolmatov-Varavin, Russian Ch 1996, White tried an interesting new approach with 16 ♖e2!?, refusing the pawn and adopting a more strategic plan. The immediate idea is that 16...cxd5? can be answered by the powerful 17 ♖xb5. Instead, the game continued 16...♜b8 17 dxc6 ♙xc6 18 ♜ad1 and Black had some problems dealing with the simple plan of ♖c2-b4. After 18...♖a4?! 19 ♙xa4! bxa4 20 ♙c5 ♖c8 21 ♙b4 the weakness of the black pawns was becoming more and more apparent. Wedberg suggests 18...♖bc8, protecting b5 and d6, as an improvement, but after 19 ♙c5! ♖c7 20 ♙b4 ♜d8 Black is somewhat restricted.

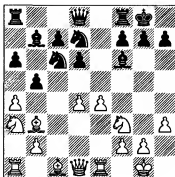
13 cxd4 (D)

13...♞e8

Black continues to put pressure on both centre pawns. Other lines include:

a) 13...♖b6?! 14 ♙f4! bxa4 15 ♙xa4 ♖xa4 16 ♖xa4 a5 17 ♙d2! ♞e8 18 d5 ♖b4 19 ♙xb4 axb4 20 ♖xb4

B



♜b8 21 ♖c4! gave White a clear advantage in Kasparov-Karpov, New York/Lyons Wch (18) 1990.

b) 13...♖a5 14 ♙a2 b4 15 ♖c4 ♖xc4 16 ♙xc4 and now 16...♞e8 17 ♖b3 ♞xe4 18 ♞xe4 ♙xe4 19 ♙xf7+ ♖h8 20 ♙d5 ♙xd5 looks slightly better for White, but 16...d5 seems reasonable, e.g. 17 exd5 ♖b6 18 ♙d3 ♖xd5 and Black had a playable position in Ivanchuk-Xie Jun, Monaco Amber blindfold 1996. We await to see if anyone will repeat this with their eyes open!

14 ♙f4 ♖a5 15 ♙c2 b4 16 ♖b1 c5

With this move Black begins his counterattack on the white centre. However, there are some important alternatives:

a) 16...b3!? 17 ♙d3 c5 18 ♖bd2 cxd4 19 ♙xd6 ♖b6 20 e5 ♙e7 21 ♖e4 ♜ad8! 22 ♖c1 (22 ♖c1 ♙xe4 23 ♙xe7 ♙xe7 24 ♙xe4 ♖c6 25 a5 ♖xa5 26 ♜xd4 also looks good) 22...♙xe4 23 ♙c7 ♖b4 24 ♙xe4 ♖c5 25 ♙xd8 ♜xd8 26 ♖f4 and White's material advantage told in Ernst-Tisdall, Gausdal 1991.

b) 16...g6!?, blunting White's king-side offensive, deserves some consideration. After 17 ♖bd2 ♜f8 18 e5 ♜e6 19 ♙h6 dxe5 20 dxe5 ♙e7 21 ♙e4 ♙xe4 22 ♞xe4 ♞d5 23 ♞c2 ♞ed8 Black had succeeded in equalizing in Ernst-Barkhagen, Haninge 1997.

c) 16...♜f8!? is another enticing idea. Black plans to re-route this knight to the more active e6-square before starting central operations. After 17 ♖bd2 (17 ♞d3!?) 17...♜e6 18 ♙e3 c5 19 d5 ♜f8 20 ♞b1 c4 21 ♞e2 ♞c8 a Benoni-type structure is reached in which Black's queenside counterplay compensates for White's solid centre, Svidler-Smagin, Russian Ch (St Petersburg) 1998.

17 ♖bd2

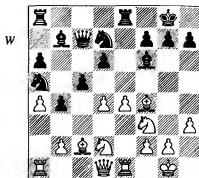
The d-pawn is hot. After 17 ♙xd6? b3!, 18 ♙xb3? runs into 18...♞b6!, while 18 ♙d3 allows 18...c4, picking up the c-pawn.

After the text-move, the d-pawn is attacked in earnest.

17...♞c7 (D)

In Onishchuk-Piket, Wijk aan Zee 1997, Black defended with 17...♜f8, but after 18 e5! dxe5 19 dxe5 ♙e7 20 ♞e2 ♞b6 21 ♙d3 ♞ad8 22 ♜c4 ♜xc4 23 ♙xc4 White had a very pleasant position. Black's queenside majority is going nowhere, giving White a free hand for operations on the kingside.

The position after 17...♞c7 arose in Luther-B.Lalić, Hastings 1995/6. White continued with 18 ♞c1 ♞ad8 19 ♙b1



g6 and Black was allowed to consolidate his position. In his notes to the game, Lalić comes up with the far more critical 18 e5! dxe5 19 dxe5 and now:

a) 19...♜xe5? 20 ♜xe5 ♙xe5 21 ♞h5 wins for White.

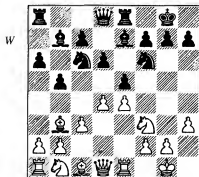
b) 19...♞ad8 20 ♜g5! ♙xg5 21 ♙xg5 ♞a8 22 ♙f4 and White not only possesses the bishop-pair, but also dangerous attacking chances on the kingside.

c) Lalić gives the prophylactic 19...g6 as Black best defence, but after 20 ♜e4 ♙xe4 21 ♙xe4 ♞ad8 White has the powerful 22 ♙d5!, threatening 23 e6. 22...♜xe5 fails to 23 ♜xe5 ♙xe5 24 ♙xe5 ♞xe5 25 ♞xe5 ♞xe5 26 ♙xf7+, while after 22...♞c7 23 ♙g3 White keeps all the threats.

These lines all look quite dangerous for Black, so perhaps he could do worse than seek alternatives at moves 13 and 16.

12 The Zaitsev Variation

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♖b5 a6 4 ♙a4
♘f6 5 0-0 ♙e7 6 ♞e1 b5 7 ♙b3 d6 8
c3 0-0 9 h3 ♙b7 10 d4 ♞e8 (D)



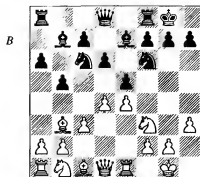
In the last twenty years the Zaitsev Variation has sprung from virtually nowhere to being perhaps the most important variation of the entire Ruy Lopez. Previously it was thought to be dubious on account of 11 ♘g5, attacking f7, but then Karpov's trainer Igor Zaitsev showed that Black could calmly retreat with 11... ♞f8! and that 12 f4 came to nothing. Indeed it was discovered that White had nothing better than to go back with 12 ♘f3. This was the turning point for the opening. Karpov himself employed it in many classic World Championship battles with Kasparov and today it remains the choice of many top grandmasters.

The main advantage of the Zaitsev is that Black can exert very quick pressure on the e4-pawn, and this prevents White from carrying out the usual ♘bd2-f1-g3 knight manoeuvre until the tension in the centre is resolved. This is a major plus-point as White finds it harder than usual to develop smoothly. On the other hand, White still has many ways to try to keep an opening advantage. It must also be said that from a practical point of view the Zaitsev has the disadvantage that White can simply repeat moves starting, as described above, with 11 ♘g5.

As the Zaitsev is such a tough nut to crack, I've decided to advocate two quite different systems for White after the standard moves 11 ♘bd2 ♙f8. The first is 12 d5, which has become quite popular recently. After this move, the play is quite positional in nature, with both sides battling over key central squares. The other line we will study is 12 a4, which is the traditional main line. Unlike 12 d5, this usually leads to ultra-sharp play, where White will try to land a knockout blow on the kingside. Sometimes White's attack can be ferocious, with all the pieces taking part, but Black's defensive resources cannot be underestimated, and if Black survives then his superiority on the queenside can often be a deciding factor.

The Theory of the Zaitsev Variation

1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♘c6 3 ♘b5 a6 4 ♘a4
 ♙f6 5 0-0 ♘e7 6 ♞e1 b5 7 ♘b3 d6 8
 c3 0-0 9 h3 ♘b7 10 d4 (D)



10...♞e8

This continues the theme of pressurizing the e4-pawn. Other ideas:

a) 10...exd4 gives up the centre prematurely and with accurate play White can hope for a substantial advantage, e.g. 11 cxd4 d5 12 e5 ♘e4 13 ♘c3 ♘a5 14 ♘c2 f5 (14...♘b4 15 ♘xe4! dxe4 16 ♞xe4! ♘xe4 17 ♘xe4 ♞b8 allows White to initiate a standard 'Greek Gift' sacrifice with 18 ♘xh7+ ♗xh7 19 ♘g5+, when both 19...♗g8 20 ♖h5 and 19...♗g6 20 ♖g4 f5 21 exf6 ♖c8 22 ♘c6+ ♗xf6 23 d5 are devastating) 15 exf6 ♘xf6 16 ♘xe4 dxe4 17 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 18 ♞xe4 c5 19 ♞g4 cxd4 20 ♘g5 d3 21 ♘xf6 ♖xf6 22 ♖xd3 ♖xb2 23 ♖d5+ ♗h8 24 ♞e1 and White has a strong attack, Tal-Lehmann, Hamburg 1960.

b) 10...♘a5 is a reasonable transpositional move. Following 11 ♘c2, 11...c5 gives us a Chigorin, while Black can also continue with 11...♘c4 12 b3 ♘b6 13 ♘bd2 and now:

b1) 13...♘bd7 reaches a type of Breyer position where Black has lost time, as it has taken the knight five moves to reach d7 rather than three. In Fischer-Stein, Sousse IZ 1967, White continued powerfully with 14 b4! and after 14...exd4 15 cxd4 a5 16 bxa5 c5 17 e5 dxe5 18 dxe5 ♘d5 19 ♘e4 ♘b4 20 ♘b1 ♞xa5 21 ♖e2 Black was facing a menacing attack.

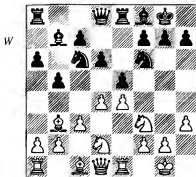
b2) After 13...♞e8 White's simplest plan is to continue with 14 ♘f1 ♘f8 15 ♘g3, when 15...h6 reaches the Smyslov Variation while 15...c5 16 a4 c4 17 a5 exd4 18 cxd4 cxb3 19 ♘xb3 gave White an edge in Beliavsky-Klován, USSR 1977.

c) 10...♘d7 has been seen a few times, although a significant proportion of these occasions have been preceded with 10...♞e8 11 ♘g5 ♞f8 12 ♘f3, when Black decides to avoid repetition. After 10...♘d7 White has the option of transposing to the Karpov Variation with 11 a4 ♘f6, or beginning the knight manoeuvre with 11 ♘bd2 and now:

c1) 11...♘f6 12 ♘f1 ♞e8 13 ♘g3 g6 14 ♘h6 ♘a5 15 ♘c2 c5 16 d5 with an edge to White, Ljubojević-Karpov, Turin 1982.

c2) 11...exd4!? 12 cxd4 ♘b4 13 ♘f1 c5 14 a3 (or 14 ♘g3!?) 14...♘c6 15 d5 ♘ce5 16 ♘xe5 dxe5 again with a small advantage, Ehlvest-Karpov, USSR Ch (Moscow) 1988.

11 ♖bd2 ♙f8 (D)



We will now study the two most important moves in this position:

A: 12 d5 109

B: 12 a4 113

A)

12 d5

Black is faced with a decision about where to move his knight:

A1: 12...♖e7 109

A2: 12...♖b8 110

12...♖a5 cannot be recommended. After 13 ♙c2 c6 14 b4! ♖c4 15 ♖xc4 bxc4 16 dxc6 ♙xc6 Black has problems regarding both the light squares and his loose c4-pawn. Am.Rodriguez-Suarez, El Vendrell 1994 continued 17 ♙g5 h6 18 ♙xf6 ♗xf6 19 ♙a4! ♙xa4 20 ♗xa4 ♗e6 21 ♙ad1 ♙ab8 22 ♖d2 ♗c8 23 ♖f1 ♙b5 24 ♖e3 and White's domination was very apparent.

A1)

12...♖e7 13 ♖f1

Transferring the knight to the kingside is pretty standard, but given that Black's knights are also heading in that direction it's worth considering a change of tack with 13 c4, e.g.:

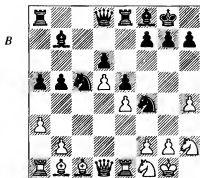
a) 13...♖d7 14 ♙c2 c6 15 b3 ♙c8 16 ♖f1 ♗c7 17 ♖e3 left White with a pleasant space advantage in Anand-Deshmukh, Calcutta 1992.

b) 13...c6 14 ♙c2 bxc4 15 dxc6 ♖xc6 16 ♖xc4 ♖d4! 17 ♖xd4 exd4 18 ♙g5 (18 ♗xd4 d5! gives Black good counterplay) 18...d5 19 ♙xf6 ♗xf6 20 e5 ♗h6 21 ♖d2 ♙b4 22 ♙c2 ♙xd2 23 ♗xd2 ♗xd2 24 ♙xd2 ♙xe5 with an equal position, Topalov-Piket, Amsterdam 1996.

13...♖g6 14 ♖h2 ♖d7

14...♗d7 15 ♖g4 allows Black the possibility of 15...♖xe4!? 16 ♙xe4 f5, although after 17 ♙e1 fxg4 18 ♗xg4 ♗xg4 19 hxg4 ♖c7 20 ♙d1 White's position is still more pleasant and he can increase the pressure further with ♖g3-e4.

15 a3 ♖c5 16 ♙a2 ♖f4 17 c4 c6 18 cxb5 cxb5 19 ♙b1 a5 20 h4! (D)

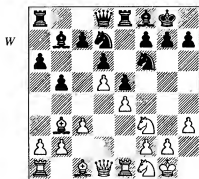


Planning to meet 20...♖xh4 with 21 g3 ♖h3+ 22 ♔g2, when Black loses the knight. We are following a heavy-weight manoeuvring contest, Topalov-Piket, Wijk aan Zee 1996, which continued 20...g6 21 g3 ♖h5 22 ♖g4 ♗e7 23 ♙c2 ♙c8 24 b3 and White kept a small advantage.

A2)

12...♖b8 13 ♖f1 ♖bd7 (D)

The immediate 13...c6 is too hasty and only wakes up White's bishop on b3. After 14 dxc6 ♙xc6 15 ♖g3 ♙a7 (15...♖bd7 runs into 16 ♖g5!) 16 a4 ♙d7 17 axb5 axb5 18 ♙g5 h6 19 ♙xf6 ♗xf6 20 ♖h2 ♙c8 21 ♖g4 ♗d8 22 ♖e3 White is ready to occupy the juicy outpost at d5, Wang Zili-Henao, Thessaloniki OL 1988.



Now White has two different approaches:

A21: 14 ♖3h2 110

A22: 14 ♖g3 111

A21)

14 ♖3h2

Beginning the fight for the d5-square. This knight will come to g4, where it will exchange a protector of the d5-square.

14...♖c5

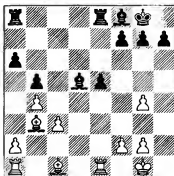
Black can also play more directly with 14...c6, but this is certainly more risky. After 15 dxc6 ♙xc6 16 ♙g5, Short-Beliavsky, Groningen FIDE KO Wch 1997 continued 16...♗c7 17 ♗f3 ♗b7 18 ♖g3 d5 19 ♖g4 dxc4 20 ♗f5! ♖d5 21 ♖xe4 ♙e6 22 ♙ad1 and Black was under severe pressure. The game concluded 22...h5?! 23 ♖c3! ♖f4 24 ♙xf4 ♙xe4 25 ♙xd7! ♙xf5 26 ♙xb7 exf4 27 ♙xf7! 1-0. No doubt Black has some improvements here, but his position does look difficult to defend. Short points out that 16...h6 17 ♙xf6 ♖xf6 also does not solve all Black's problems, due to 18 ♖g4!. White is winning the battle of the d5-square, because 18...♖xe4? 19 ♗f3 d5 loses to 20 ♙xc4 dxe4 21 ♗xf7+. It certainly looks more sensible to chase the bishop off the important a2-g8 diagonal before proceeding with the advance ...c6.

15 ♙c2 c6 16 b4 ♖cd7 17 dxc6 ♙xc6 18 ♖g4

After this move Black achieves the ...d5 advance and the game fizzles out to equality. Another method is 18 ♙g5, which led to an unclear position after 18...♗c7 19 ♙xf6 ♖xf6 20 ♖g4 ♖d7 21 ♗f3 ♖b6 22 ♙b3 ♗b7 23 ♖g3 d5 in Korneev-Ibragimov, Russia Cup (Ekaterinburg) 1997.

18...♖xg4 19 hxg4 ♖b6 20 ♖e3 d5 21 exd5 ♖xd5 22 ♖xd5 ♗xd5 23 ♗xd5 ♙xd5 24 ♙b3 (D)

B



In the game Kasparov-Ivanchuk, Linares 1998, Black now played the inaccurate 24...♙e6?! and after 25 ♙xe6 ♜xe6 26 a4! White was still slightly better. 24...♞ad8! looks like the easiest way to reach a level endgame.

A22)

14 ♖g3

White's most popular move. Black must now choose between breaking in the centre immediately or trying to improve his position first:

A221: 14...♖c5 111

A222: 14...g6 112

A221)

14...♖c5 15 ♙c2 c6

Once Black has committed himself to ...♖c5 it makes sense to break immediately with ...c6, as any delay could prove to be costly. For example, after 15...a5 16 ♖h2 g6 17 ♜f3 h5 18 ♙e3 ♖fd7 19 ♞ad1 ♜e7 20 ♖gf1 ♙g7 21 ♙c1 White is perfectly ready to meet Black's ...c6, Short-Timman, El Escorial Ct (10) 1993. See Chapter 9 for more of this game.

16 b4 ♖cd7 17 dxc6 ♙xc6 18 ♙b3 h6

Correctly preventing the pin of the f6-knight. After 18...♖b6 19 ♙g5! h6 20 ♙xf6 ♜xf6 21 ♖h2 ♖c4 22 ♖g4 ♜e6 23 ♖e3 ♞ad8 24 ♜c2 d5 25 ♞ad1 ♞d7 26 exd5 ♙xd5 27 ♞xd5! ♞xd5 28 ♖xc4 bxc4 29 ♙xc4 White has won the battle of the d5-square and gained a pawn, Tseshkovsky-Timoshchenko, Sverdlovsk 1987.

19 ♖h4 ♖b6

The 19...♖xe4 trick, unleashing an attack on h4, doesn't work because of the powerful reply 20 ♜h5!

20 ♖hf5 ♖c4

20...d5!/? led to some fireworks in Wells-Acs, Budapest 1997 after 21 ♖h5 ♖xh5 (21...♞c6!?) 22 ♜xh5 ♖d7 23 ♖xh6+!/? (23 ♜g4 also looks interesting) 23...gxh6 24 ♞e3 ♖f6 25 ♞g3+ ♖h8 26 ♜xf7 ♜e7 27 ♜g6 ♜g7 28 ♜f5, although with 28...♙d7! Black was able to steer the position into a level endgame after 29 ♞xg7 ♙xf5 30 ♞f7 ♖xe4 31 ♞xf5 ♖xc3.

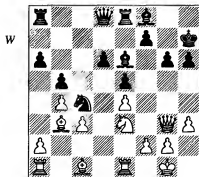
21 ♖h5 ♖xh5 22 ♜xh5 g6

An improvement over 22...♙d7 23 ♙xc4 bxc4 24 ♖e3 ♙e6 25 a4, when the d5-square is firmly in White's possession, Hjartarson-Gligorić, Reykjavik 1995.

23 ♜g4

If 23 ♖xh6+?, Black has 23...♖h7! 24 ♜f3 ♙xh6, when 25 ♙xh6 ♖xh6 26 ♜xf7 ♞f8 wins for Black, while after 25 ♙xc4 bxc4 26 ♜xf7+ ♙g7 27 ♜xc4 ♙b5 Black's piece is worth more than White's three pawns.

23...♙d7 24 ♜g3 ♖h7 25 ♖e3 ♙e6 (D)



Almasi-Ibragimov, Vienna 1996. Now White should play 26 ♙xc4 bxc4 27 ♞d1 , maintaining a grip on d5.

A222)

14... ♞g6 15 ♜h2

Planning ♜g4 . Also possible is 15 ♙e3 , e.g. 15... ♜c5 16 ♙c2 c6 17 b4 ♜cd7 18 dxc6 ♙xc6 19 ♙b3 ♜b6 20 ♞d3 and now:

a) 20... ♞a7 21 a4 (21 c4! ? may be stronger) 21... bxa4 22 ♙xa4 ♙xa4 23 ♙xb6 ♞xb6 24 ♞xa4 ♞c7 was equal in Anand-Ivanchuk, Monaco Amber rpd 1994.

b) 20... ♞b8 21 ♞ad1 ♞b7 22 ♜h2 ♙d7 (22... h5 23 ♜f3 ♞d7 24 ♙g5! is slightly better for White) and instead of 23 ♙xb6! ♞xb6 24 ♜gf1 ♙h6 , which was equal in Short-Ivanchuk, Amsterdam 1994, White should play 23 f4! exf4 24 ♙xf4 ♙e6 25 ♜f3 , with a small plus.

15... h5! ?

This move prevents ♜g4 , but also weakens g5 , and the white knight quickly returns to f3 to eye this square. Other possibilities for Black:

a) 15... c6 is premature here. After 16 dxc6 ♙xc6 17 ♙g5! White has the advantage.

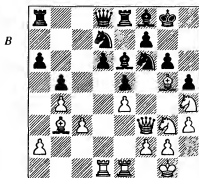
b) 15... ♜h8! ? 16 ♜g4 ♜g8! (preparing ... h5 followed by ... h6) 17 a4 h5 was Mencinger-Ibragimov, Groningen 1994. Here White should play 18 ♜h2 , preparing to come back to f3.

c) 15... ♜c5! ? 16 ♙c2 c6 17 b4 ♜cd7 18 dxc6 ♙xc6 19 ♙b3 ♜b6 and here either 20 ♙g5 or 20 ♜g4 should be enough for an edge.

16 ♜f3 ♜c5 17 ♙c2 c6 18 b4 ♜cd7 19 dxc6 ♙xc6 20 ♙b3 ♜b6 21 ♙g5 ♙d7

Black must be careful not to open up the centre too early. If 21... ♙g7 22 ♜h4 d5 23 ♞f3! White's initiative starts to assume menacing proportions.

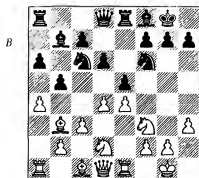
22 ♜h4 ♙e6 23 ♞f3 ♜bd7 24 ♞ad1 (D)



We are following Anand-Ivanchuk, Dos Hermanas 1996. The game is delicately balanced. Black is under some serious pressure on the kingside, but all his pieces are contributing towards

defence, and he can hope to exploit the weak c3-pawn later on.

B)
12 a4 (D)



The traditional main line of the Zaitsev.

12...h6

This move, preventing ♖g5 once and for all, is Black's most popular choice. Another method is 12...♗d7, when Black can meet ♖g5 with ...♘d8. White should claim a space advantage with 13 d5 ♘e7 14 c4 ♖g6 15 ♙c2 c6 16 b3!, when the pawn-chain is fully supported, giving White an edge. One possible continuation is 16...♗c7 17 ♖f1 bxc4 18 bxc4 a5 19 ♖g3 ♙a6 20 ♙d3 ♞ec8 21 ♙e3 ♞ab8 22 ♞c1 ♘d7 23 ♖f5, when Black is slightly cramped, Smirin-Goldin, Novosibirsk 1995.

13 ♙c2 exd4

This move initiates Black's most ambitious and aggressive plan. He presents the centre to White, but in return for this Black will gain serious

queenside counterplay. Even so, more conservative ideas also deserve some attention:

a) 13...♘b8!? (Black attempts to steer the game into Breyer channels) 14 ♙d3 c6 15 ♖f1 ♘bd7 16 ♖g3 g6 and now 17 b3 ♙g7 18 ♗c2 ♗c7 19 ♙e3 d5! led to unclear complications in Rechlis-Kraidman, Jerusalem 1986. Instead, White could consider 17 h4!, preparing to soften up the black kingside with h5.

b) 13...♞b8 lends indirect support to the b-pawn, but looks a bit passive to me. Sensible play with 14 axb5 axb5 15 ♙d3 ♙c8 16 ♖f1 ♙d7 17 ♖g3 ♗c8 18 ♙d2 ♗b7 19 b4 was enough to give White a significant plus in Geller-Gligorić, Sochi 1986.

c) The non-committal 13...g6!? looks like the best of Black's alternatives. 14 ♖f1 exd4! 15 cxd4 ♘b4 gives Black lots of counterplay, so White should once again block the centre with 14 d5. Following 14...♘b8, Black succeeded in obtaining a roughly level position in the game Ivanchuk-Ljubojević, Monaco rpd 1993 after 15 b3 c6 16 c4 bxc4 17 bxc4 a5, so perhaps White could consider 15 ♙d3!?, exerting immediate pressure on the b5-pawn.

14 cxd4 ♘b4 15 ♙b1 c5!

Mobilizing the queenside pawn majority is obviously the most natural course for Black, but there are also some important alternatives in this position:

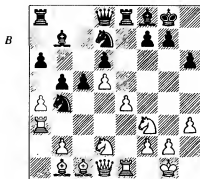
a) The slightly illogical-looking 15...bxa4 has been used by Karpov, but not since he was soundly beaten in

Kasparov-Karpov, New York/Lyons Wch (2) 1990, which went 16 ♖xa4 a5 17 ♖a3 ♖a6 18 ♘h2 g6 19 f3! (bolstering the centre and thus denying Black any counterplay against c4) 19...♗d7 20 ♘c4 ♗b5 21 ♖c3! ♙c8 22 ♙e3 c6?! 23 ♗c1 ♘h7 24 ♘g4! and White was in firm control.

b) 15...g6 keeps Black's options open, but also gives White extra time to begin operations in the centre. In Anand-Kamsky, Las Palmas PCA Ct (1) 1995 White kept the advantage after 16 ♖a3 ♙g7 17 e5! dxe5 18 dxe5 ♘h5 19 axb5 axb5 20 ♗b3 c5 21 ♘e4 ♙xe5 22 ♘xc5! ♙xf3 23 ♗xf3 ♖c8 24 ♘e4 and the game had opened up nicely for the bishop-pair.

c) 15...♗d7 was tried in Anand-Kamsky, Las Palmas PCA Ct (9) 1995. After 16 b3 g6 17 ♙b2 ♙g7 18 ♗c1 ♖ac8 19 ♙c3 c5 20 d5 the game reached a Benoni-type set-up which is favourable to White, due to Black's poor bishop on b7, which is simply biting on White's granite centre.

16 d5 ♘d7 17 ♖a3 (D)



A crucial position in the 12 a4 Zaitsev. Black has to choose between two distinct courses of action:

B1: 17...c4 114

B2: 17...f5 116

B1)

17...c4

In the late 1980s this move was much more fashionable than 17...f5, but for some reason it has now taken more of a back seat. Nevertheless, it is fully playable and perhaps more logical than 17...f5. Black is certainly second best on the kingside, so he refuses to make a weakening pawn move and concentrates immediately on queenside counterplay. White must play very actively, as given another couple of moves, Black will entrench a knight on d3 after ...♘c5.

18 axb5

I'm endorsing this move rather than 18 ♘d4, as the theoretical position arising after 18 ♘d4 ♗f6 19 ♘2f3 ♘d3! 20 ♙xd3 b4 appears fine for Black. 21 ♖a1 cxd3 22 ♗xd3 ♘c5 gives Black plenty of counterplay, while 21 ♙xc4 bxa3 22 b3 ♘c5 affords White compensation for the exchange, but no more than that. Anand-Kamsky, Las Palmas PCA Ct (5) 1995 continued 23 ♗c2 ♗g6 and here Anand could find nothing better than to repeat moves with 24 ♘h4 ♗f6 25 ♘hf3 ♗g6 26 ♘h4.

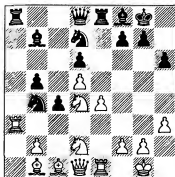
18...axb5 19 ♘d4 (D)

Now we will consider two main lines for Black:

B11: 19...♖xa3 115

B12: 19...♘e5 116

B



19...♖b6 20 ♖f5 ♗e5 21 ♙g3 g6 is also not bad, when White's attack looks dangerous, but Black has threats of his own, including ...♗ed3. Yang Xian-Lin Ta, China 1988 continued 22 ♖f3 ♗ed3 23 ♙c3 ♗d8! (23...♗c7? 24 ♖3h4 looks strong for White) 24 ♙xh6 ♗f6! (24...♗xe1 25 ♗xc1 ♖xd5 26 ♗c1! ♗c7 27 ♙xf8 ♙xf8 28 ♗h6 gives White a winning attack) and after 25 ♙xf8? ♗xf8, White suddenly had too many pieces *en prise*. 25 ♙e2 is stronger, when 25...♙xe4!? 26 ♙xe4 ♗xf5 can be answered by 27 ♙f4!, so perhaps Black should play 25...♙a1 instead. In any case, it's quite surprising that we have seen so little of 19...♖b6.

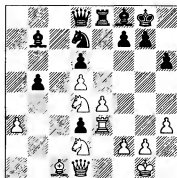
B11)

19...♙xa3

In this line Black obtains a passed pawn on d3, which is usually quite difficult to keep hold of. However, Black can hope that the inconvenience White experiences in extracting the pawn will give him time to organize effective counterplay.

20 ♖xa3 ♗d3 21 ♙xd3 cxd3 22 ♙e3 (D)

B



22...♗e5

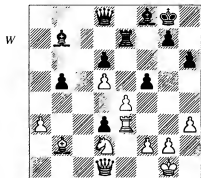
The other way to defend d3 is with 22...♗c5 23 ♙b2:

a) 23...♗a5 24 ♖f5 g6 25 ♖g3 ♙g7 26 ♙xg7 ♗xg7 27 ♖b3 ♗xa3 28 ♖xc5 ♗xc5 29 ♙xd3 left White with the advantage in Kotronias-Gligorić, Yugoslav Cht (Nikšić) 1997, because Black's bishop is out of play and his kingside dark squares are very weak. In fact the end was not long in coming: 29...b4 30 ♙b3 ♙c8 31 ♗a1+ ♗g8 32 ♗f6 ♙a6 33 ♙f3 ♗c7 34 e5 ♙b7 35 exd6 1-0. There is no defence to ♖h5.

b) 23...♙c8 24 ♖c6 ♗h4 (initiating active play against the white centre; this is the most logical way to continue, as Black must try to disturb White's position as much as possible) 25 ♙d4 f5 26 ♖f3 ♗h5 27 e5 f4 28 ♙e1 dxe5 29 ♖xe5 ♗f5, Anand-Beliavsky, Madrid 1998, and now Anand suggests 30 ♗b1, keeping an eye on b5 and d3, as a way to keep the advantage.

23 ♖f3 f5!

The only way! 23...♗c4 24 ♖xd3 ♗d7 25 ♗xc4 bxc4 26 ♖e3 left Black with no compensation for the pawn in Ivanchuk-Kruppa, Frunze 1988.

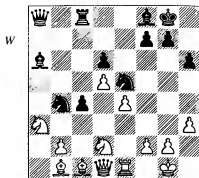
24 ♗xe5 ♖xe5 25 ♖b2 ♖e7 (D)

The d3-pawn is doomed, but Black has succeeded in creating some counterplay against White's centre. Glek-Kharlamov, corr 1988 continued 26 exf5! ♖xe3 27 fxe3 ♖xd5 28 ♗g4 ♗c8 29 ♗d4 ♖c4 30 ♗xc4!? bxc4 31 f6 with a highly complex position, where White's threats on the kingside, coupled with the passed a-pawn, outweigh Black's far-flung passed pawns.

B12)

19...♗e5 20 ♖xa8 ♗xa8 21 ♗xb5 ♖c8

This is better than 21...♗a5 22 ♗a3 ♖a6 (both 22...♗ed3? 23 ♗dxc4 and 22...♗bd3 23 ♗axc4 ♗xc4 24 ♖xd3 favour White) 23 ♖e3 ♗c5 24 ♖c3, when Black doesn't quite have enough play for the pawn, Anand-Kamsky, Las Palmas PCA Ct (7) 1995.

22 ♗a3 ♖a6 (D)

We are following de Firmian-A.Ivanov, USA Ch (Parsippany) 1996, which continued 23 ♖e3 ♗bd3 24 ♖xd3 cxd3 25 b3 ♖e7 26 ♗dc4 and after 26...♖g5 27 ♗xd6 ♖d8 28 ♗dc4 ♖xc4 29 ♗xc4 ♖xe3 30 ♖xe3 ♗xc4 31 bxc4 ♗a3 32 c5, the white pawns looked very dangerous. Instead, the clearest route to equality looks to be 26...♗xc4! 27 bxc4 ♖xc4 28 ♗xc4 ♖xc4 29 ♖xd3 ♗a1 30 ♖e3 ♗xd1+31 ♖xd1 ♖xe4.

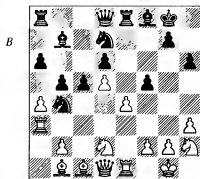
B2)**17...f5**

Currently the main line of the 12 a4 Zaitsev. Black ambitiously breaks open the white centre, but in doing so he weakens his kingside.

18 ♗h2!? (D)

Other moves, such as 18 ♖ae3 and 18 exf5, exist, but I believe the text-move presents Black with at least as many problems. The knight move opens the way for both the queen and the a3-rook to join the attack, while

after ...fxe4 the knight can be very powerfully posted on g4.



18...♟f6

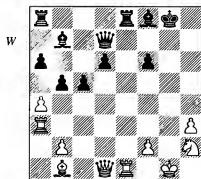
18...c4 19 exf5 ♞c5 20 ♜xe8 ♞xe8 21 ♜g3 ♞bd3 22 f6 g6 23 b3, as in Ivanchuk-Karpov, Monaco Amber rpd 1993, presents us with a crazy position typical for the 12 a4 Zaitsev. The whole board is on fire, but somehow I would prefer to be White, as you get the impression that one slip from Black would end up with his king being checkmated!

18...♞h8 looks a bit too slow to me. In Dovzhik-Hedman, Budapest 1993, White built up an enormous attack after 19 ♜g3 ♟f6 20 ♞hf3! fxe4 21 ♞xe4 ♟xd5 22 ♞xf6 ♞xf6 23 ♟d2!. Here Black tried 23...♞xb2 but after 24 ♟xb4! ♞xb4 25 ♞xd5 ♜xe1+ 26 ♞xe1 ♞xb1 27 ♞xa8 ♞xe1+ 28 ♞h2 ♟g8 29 ♜e3 ♞a1 30 ♞d5+ ♞h7 31 ♜f3 White had come out firmly ahead in the complications.

19 ♜f3

Trying to force Black to capture on e4. An even more direct attempt at this

is with 19 g4!?. Now Black has to be quite careful. For example, 19...♞xe4? 20 ♞xe4 fxe4 21 ♟xe4 gives White a dream position, as Black's minor pieces are firmly cut off from the kingside action, of which there's bound to be plenty. 19...fxe4! is much stronger, planning to meet 20 ♞xe4 with 20...♟xd5. Leko-Almasi, Dortmund 1998 continued 20 g5!? hxg5 21 ♞xe4 ♞bxd5! (getting this knight back into the defence is very important; both 21...♟xd5?! 22 ♟xg5 and 21...♞xe4 22 ♟xe4 look very promising for White) 22 ♟xg5 ♞d7 23 ♟xf6 ♞xf6 24 ♞xf6+ gx6 (D).



Now, instead of the game continuation 25 ♞g4 ♟g7, Almasi recommends 25 ♜g3+ ♟g7 26 ♟g6 ♜xe1+ 27 ♞xe1 ♞f8 with a very unclear position. Black's queenside pawns will roll down the board, but White can commence a dangerous attack with ♞d1-h5 and ♞g4.

19...♜e5

19...fxe4?! falls in far too easily with White's plans. After 20 ♞xe4

♖xe4 21 ♜xe4 the b7-bishop and the b4-knight struggle to get back into action and 21...♞xe4? 22 ♞xe4 ♜xd5 fails to 23 ♞xf8+! ♜xf8 24 ♞xb4! cxb4 25 ♜xd5+.

Black has also tried 19...♜c8, but removing the bishop from attacking d5 looks a bit artificial to me. Pupo-Rivera, Havana Capablanca mem 1992 continued 20 exf5 ♞xe1+ 21 ♜xe1 ♖bxd5 22 ♖e4 ♞a7 23 ♖g4, when all of White's pieces were storming the black king.

20 ♞xf5

Preparing a fianchetto with 20 b3!? also poses Black some problems, e.g.:

a) 20...♖xe4 21 ♖xe4 fxe4 22 ♞g3 h5 23 ♞xe4 ♖xd5 24 ♜b2 ♖f6 25 ♞f4 and Black is getting totally overrun on the kingside, Grünfeld-Kraidman, Tel-Aviv 1992.

b) 20...fxe4! 21 ♞xf6!? ♜xf6 22 ♖g4 ♜f7 23 ♖xe5 dxe5 24 ♖xe4 ♜xd5 25 ♜g4 gives us another typical position. White's queenside is about to disintegrate, but Black will have to stave off quite a few mating threats before he can hope to cash in.

20...♞xf5 21 exf5 ♜xd5 22 ♖g4

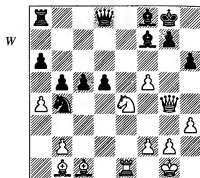
This is stronger than 22 ♖e4 ♜xe4 23 ♜xe4 d5 24 ♜f3 c4 25 ♞e6 ♖d3, as in Khalifman-Karpov, Reggio Emilia 1991/2, when we see an example of White's position going wrong. The kingside attack has been blocked and Black is ready to mow White down

through pushing his powerful central pawns.

22...♜f7

Coming back to defend the shaky light squares. This is better than the alternative 22...♖xg4 23 hxg4 ♜f7, as after 24 ♖f3 White threatens to do some damage with g5, and 24...♜e7 walks into a double attack with 25 ♜e2.

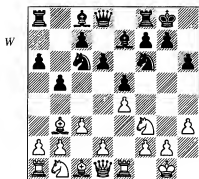
23 ♖xf6+ ♜xf6 24 ♖e4 ♜d8 25 ♜g4 d5 (D)



Black begins the central pawn-roller. This position, which occurred in Wahls-Enigk, Berlin 1993, is beautifully poised. White will obviously have lots of dangerous attacking ideas, but Black is reasonably well protected and can take heart from the fact that most endgames will give him good winning chances due to the passed d-pawn.

13 The Smyslov Variation

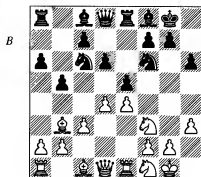
1 e4 e5 2 Qf3 Qc6 3 Qb5 a6 4 Qa4
 Qf6 5 0-0 Qe7 6 Ne1 b5 7 Qb3 d6 8
 c3 0-0 9 h3 h6 (D)



Black prepares to bolster the e5-pawn with ... Ne8 and ... Qf8 . The idea of 9...h6 is to execute this plan without having to worry about Qg5 . However, as we see in the Zaitsev Variation, Black need not worry about this move. Indeed, the Smyslov Variation has much in common with the Zaitsev, but with the important difference that against the Smyslov, White has time to carry out the Qbd2-f1-g3 manoeuvre, thus solving all his development problems. For this reason, the Smyslov is far less popular than the Zaitsev, but it must be respected as a solid, if somewhat passive, defence. White has a few different ways to play, but once again I'm advocating the main line.

The Theory of the Smyslov Variation

1 e4 e5 2 Qf3 Qc6 3 Qb5 a6 4 Qa4
 Qf6 5 0-0 Qe7 6 Ne1 b5 7 Qb3 d6 8
 c3 0-0 9 h3 h6 10 d4 Ne8 11 Qbd2
 Qf8 12 Qf1 (D)



Black now has two main options:

A: 12... Qd7 119

B: 12... Qb7 120

A)

12... Qd7 13 Qg3 Qa5 14 Qc2 c5
 15 b3!

Preparing to develop the bishop on b2, should Black exchange pawns with ... cxd4 .

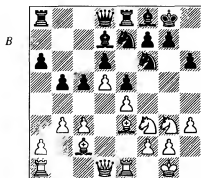
15... Qc6

After 15... cxd4 16 cxd4 Qc6 White can slowly improve the position of his

pieces, knowing that his central superiority will be sufficient for an advantage. Gufeld-Savon, Vilnius Z 1975 continued 17 ♙b2 ♞c8 (17...g6 18 ♚d2 ♜g7 19 ♞ad1 is even stronger for White as the d6-pawn is very weak) 18 ♚d2 ♞b6 19 ♞ad1 and White was very comfortable indeed.

16 d5 ♞e7 17 ♙e3 (D)

Also possible is 17 c4, for example 17... ♜g6 18 ♙e3 ♞f4 19 ♚d2 ♞h5 20 ♙d1 ♞xg3 21 fxg3 ♞h5 22 g4 with a slight advantage for White, Popović-Djurić, Sarajevo 1984.



17...♜g6

After 17... ♞c7 18 ♚d2 ♜g6 White should slowly build up a kingside attack, e.g. 19 ♞ad1 ♞eb8 20 ♞f5 a5 21 g4, as in Stull-Augustin, Pula Z 1975.

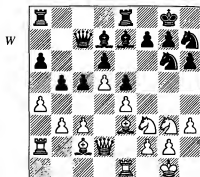
18 ♚d2 ♞h7 19 a4 ♙e7

Exchanging pieces is generally a good policy in a cramped position, but here 19... ♞h4 loses too much time. After 20 ♞xh4 ♞xh4 21 ♞e2 ♚d8 22 b4 ♞c7 23 ♞ec1 White had a clear advantage in *Deep Blue*-Kasparov, New York (2) 1997.

20 ♞a2!

I like this move, which threatens a gradual increase in pressure on the queenside. 20 ♞f5 ♙xf5 21 exf5 ♞h4 22 ♞xh4 ♙xh4 was not so clear in Lobron-Short, Brussels 1983.

20...♞c7 (D)



White has a small plus. Tošić-Abramović, Yugoslav Cht 1997 continued 21 ♞ea1 bxa4 22 b4! cxb4 23 cxb4 ♞h4 (or 23...a5 24 ♙xa4 axb4 25 ♙xd7 ♞xa2 26 ♞xa2 ♚xd7 27 ♞xb4 , with ♞f5 to follow) 24 ♞xh4 ♙xh4 25 ♞f5 ♙xf5 26 exf5 ♙g5 27 ♙xg5 ♞xg5 28 ♙xa4 ♞f8 29 ♙c6 and White picked up the a6-pawn.

B)

12...♙b7 13 ♜g3 ♞a5

13...g6 14 a4 ♞a5 15 ♙c2 transposes to the next note.

14 ♙c2 ♞c4

Black re-deploys his knight to a more influential square. Refraining from this doesn't really help Black. For example, 14...g6 15 a4 ♚d7 16 b3 ♙g7 17 ♙d2 ♞c6 18 ♙d3 ♞a7 19 d5

♖e8 20 c4 and White's space advantage is quite evident, Korchnoi-Smyslov, Rovinj/Zagreb 1970.

15 b3 ♖b6 16 a4

Simple development with 16 ♖d2 also promises White an edge, for example 16...c5 17 d5 g6 18 ♖e2, as in Gheorghiu-Gligorić, Teesside 1972.

16...bxa4

Here Black has a couple of important alternatives:

a) 16...c5 17 d5 c4 18 b4 ♖c8 19 ♖c3 ♖d7 20 a5! ♖c8 21 ♖d2 ♖h7 22 ♖h2 ♖e7 23 ♖f5 ♖g5 24 ♖xg5 hxg5 25 g4 g6 26 ♖g3 f6 27 ♖h1 ♖f8 28 ♖g2 ♖f7 29 f3 and the simple plan of h4 proved to be decisive in Fischer-Gligorić, Rovinj/Zagreb 1970.

b) 16...d5! 17 ♖xe5 dxc4 18 ♖b2! (after 18 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 19 ♖xe4 Black has the tactical trick 19...♖xe5!, when 20 ♖xa8 ♖xe1+ 21 ♖xe1 ♖xa8 is in Black's favour) 18...c5 19 ♖xe4! (19 ♖h5 cxd4 20 cxd4 ♖bd5 was unclear in Borocz-Lukacs, Budapest 1998) 19...♖xc4 20 ♖xe4 ♖xc4 21 ♖xe4 bxa4 and now Scholl-Gligorić, Amsterdam 1971 fizzled out to equality after 22 bxa4 f6 23 ♖c6 ♖d5 24 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 25 dxc5 ♖xd1+ 26 ♖xd1 ♖xa4. In my opinion, White can keep things going with 22 ♖f3!, e.g. 22...f6 23 ♖g6 axb3 24 ♖xf8 ♖xf8 25 dxc5 ♖d7 26 ♖d4 ♖e8 27 ♖d5+ ♖f7 28 ♖b4 and White's c5-pawn will prove very dangerous.

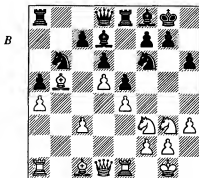
17 bxa4 a5 18 ♖d3 ♖c6

Again Black has other options:

a) 18...d5 19 exd5 exd4 (19...♖fxd5 20 ♖xe5 ♖xc3 21 ♖g4 gives White a menacing kingside initiative) 20 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 (or 20...♖xe8 21 c4 c5 22 dxc6 ♖xc6 23 ♖e5! ♖b7 24 ♖b2, when 24...♖c5 can be powerfully met by 25 ♖h5) 21 ♖b5! ♖d8 22 c4 and the d4-pawn is ready to be plucked.

b) 18...♖a6! 19 ♖xa6 ♖xa6 20 dxc5 dxc5 21 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 22 ♖xe5 ♖d6 (Winsnes-Balashov, Stockholm 1992/3) and now 23 ♖f4 g5 24 ♖g4 ♖xf4 25 ♖xf6+ ♖f8 26 e5 keeps a small advantage.

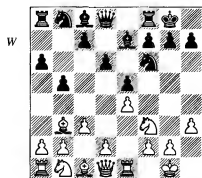
19 d5 ♖d7 20 ♖b5 (D)



This position arose in Anand-Kamsky, Linares 1991. Here Black went wrong with 20...♖xb5? and after 21 axb5 ♖fd7 22 ♖c2 ♖c5 23 c4 ♖d7 24 ♖e3 a4 25 ♖a3 Black's a-pawn was under heavy pressure. 20...♖c8 is a more resilient defence, although White still holds a significant space advantage.

14 The Breyer Variation

1 e4 e5 2 ♟f3 ♞c6 3 ♜b5 a6 4 ♜a4
 ♞f6 5 0-0 ♜e7 6 ♞e1 b5 7 ♜b3 d6 8
 c3 0-0 9 h3 ♞b8 (D)



This knight retreat may look rather odd, but this is merely the first move of a logical regrouping plan. Black's idea is to bring his knight to d7 where it supports the e5-pawn and frees the c-pawn so that it may advance to c5 and challenge the centre. In addition Black can post his bishop on b7 where it directly attacks the e4-pawn. This pressure can be enhanced by the manoeuvre ...♞e8 and ...♜f8.

If Black's plan has a weakness, then it's the relative slowness of the idea. This gives White ample time to bolster the e4-pawn and carry out the normal knight manoeuvre ♞bd2-f1-g3. The line I'm recommending for White is the most popular one at master level.

White can play on both the kingside and queenside, and has a comfortable space advantage.

The Theory of the Breyer Variation

1 e4 e5 2 ♟f3 ♞c6 3 ♜b5 a6 4 ♜a4
 ♞f6 5 0-0 ♜e7 6 ♞e1 b5 7 ♜b3 d6 8
 c3 0-0 9 h3 ♞b8 10 d4 ♞bd7

10...♜b7 is a move-order trick from Black to avoid lines beginning with 10...♞bd7 11 c4!?, which was once quite fashionable for White. After 10...♜b7 White can simply transpose with 11 ♞bd2 ♞bd7, but 11 dxe5! is much stronger:

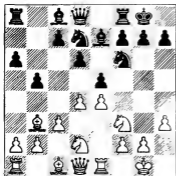
a) 11...♞xe4 12 e6 fxe6 13 ♜xe6+ ♞h8 14 ♜d5 ♞c5 15 ♜xb7 ♞xb7 16 a4 leaves Black woefully weak on the light squares, Gligorić-Benko, Yugoslavia Ct 1959.

b) 11...dxe5 12 ♞xd8 ♜xd8 13 ♞xe5 ♞xe4 14 ♜e3 ♜f6 15 ♞g4 ♞d7 16 ♞d2 ♞xd2 17 ♜xd2 ♞fe8 18 ♜f4 and now the game Keres-Benko, Yugoslavia Ct 1959 ended 18...♞xe1+?! 19 ♞xe1 ♞c8 20 ♜c2 g6? 21 ♞d1! 1-0. 18...c5 would have offered more resistance, but White's pieces are still far better coordinated after 19 ♞xe8+ ♞xe8 20 ♞d1.

11 ♞bd2 (D)

11...♜b7

B



11...♞e8?? 12 ♖f1?? ♜b7 13 ♜c2 transposed into the main line in J. Polgar-Spassky, Budapest (10) 1993, with neither player noticing that after 12 ♜xf7+! ♜xf7 13 ♖g5+ ♜g8 14 ♖e6 Black can resign! This is all the more shocking given that Spassky is a renowned expert in the Breyer from both sides of the board.

12 ♜c2

Supporting the e4-pawn, so that White can carry out the knight manoeuvre to g3.

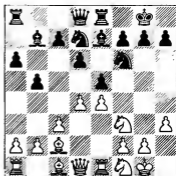
12...♞e8

Preparing to bolster the kingside with ...♞f8 and ...g6. Black can also expand on the queenside with 12...c5, when 13 ♖f1 ♞e8 14 ♖g3 ♞f8 15 d5 g6 16 a4 reaches the main line, but White can also delay the knight manoeuvre, e.g. 13 b3!? (preventing a later ...c4) 13...♞e8 14 d5 g6 15 a4 ♞b8 16 b4! c4 17 ♖f1 ♞f8 18 ♜g5 ♜g7 19 ♞d2 ♖b6 20 a5 ♖bd7 21 g4 ♜h8 22 ♖g3 ♞g8 23 ♜g2 ♞f8 24 ♞h1 and White has reached an ideal position, Kavalek-Gligorić, Nice OL 1974. The queenside is completely

blocked, leaving White a free hand to build up a gradual attack on the other wing.

13 ♖f1 (D)

B



13...♞f8

Smashing open the centre with 13...d5!? is an interesting idea, but White can remain on top after 14 ♖xe5! ♖xe5 15 dxe5 ♖xe4, when the position is more reminiscent of the Open Lopez. After 16 f3 Black has two options:

a) 16...♖g5 17 ♖g3 ♜c5+ 18 ♜h2 f6 19 ♜xg5 fxg5 20 ♞b1 h6 21 ♞d1! (it's worth expending two tempi to force Black to weaken his light squares so badly) 21...♞e6 22 ♖f5 h5 23 ♞d2 and White enjoys a big positional advantage, Lobron-Portisch, Wijk aan Zee 1985.

b) 16...♖c5 17 b4 ♖d7 18 f4 c5 19 ♞d3 ♖f8 20 bxc5 ♜xc5+ 21 ♞e3 and White retains excellent attacking prospects, Greenfeld-Shvidler, Israel 1984.

14 ♖g3 g6

14...c5 15 d5 g6 16 a4 comes to the same thing.

15 a4 c5

It's important for Black to claim some space on the queenside. After the plausible 15...♙g7 it's now the right time for 16 d5!. Black wishes to break with ...c6, but with the bishop on g7, this leaves the d6-pawn weak. In fact Black can force through ...c6 with 16...♜b8, but then White has enough time to support the pawn-chain with 17 b3 c6 18 c4, with a space advantage. Grünfeld-Lev, Tel-Aviv 1990 continued 18...bxc4 19 bxc4 a5 20 ♙e3 ♜c7 21 ♜d2 ♙a6 22 ♞ac1 ♞eb8 23 c5! cxd5 24 exd5 dxc5 25 d6, when the passed d-pawn was very powerful.

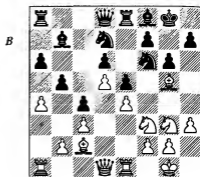
16 d5 c4

This is the logical follow-up to Black's last move. The c5-square is vacated for the knight, where it can eye the outposts at b3 and d3. The only important alternative is 16...♜b6, when 17 ♜e2, pressurizing the b5-pawn, is the most testing response. Now 17...c4 looks rather silly with knight on b6, so Black should play 17...♝xa4 18 ♙xa4 bxa4 19 ♞xa4, when we reach a position where Black has the bishop-pair, but the position is quite closed and Black's queenside structure is compromised. Here are a couple of lines:

a) 19...♝d7 20 ♞a3 ♝b6 21 ♝h2 ♙g7 22 ♝g4 ♙c8 23 c4 ♙xg4 24 hxg4, when White has more space and the better minor pieces, Torre-Gligorić, Bad Lauterberg 1977.

b) 19...♙c8 20 ♙g5 h6 21 ♙e3 ♞b8 22 ♞ea1 ♝h7 (22...♝d7 looks stronger) 23 ♜c2 h5 24 ♝d2 ♙e7 25 ♝c4, and the knight has found a

wonderful outpost on c4, Geller-Romanishin, USSR 1978.

17 ♙g5 (D)

White develops his last minor piece and sets about trying to control some dark squares on the kingside.

17...h6

Gaining time on the bishop, although White will later regain a tempo by attacking h6 with ♜d2.

Black has many alternatives at this point:

a) 17...♙g7 18 ♜d2 ♜e7 (alternatively, 18...♝c5 19 ♝h2 h5 20 ♝h1 ♜c7 21 ♙h6 ♙h8 22 f4 exf4 23 ♜xf4 ♞ab8 24 axb5 axb5 25 ♝f3 ♞bd8 26 ♞ad1 with an edge for White, Balashov-Baikov, USSR 1974) 19 ♞a3 ♜f8 20 ♞ea1 ♝c5 21 ♜c1 ♞ec8 22 ♙e3 ♝fd7 23 ♝d2 and White has a slight advantage, Geller-Abramović, Moscow 1982.

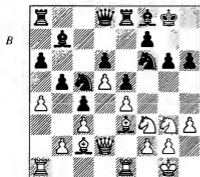
b) 17...♝c5 18 ♜d2 ♙e7 19 ♙h6 ♝fd7 20 ♝h2 ♞b8 21 ♞f1 ♙c8 22 axb5 axb5 was Kavalek-Spassky, Montreal 1979 and now 23 ♝g4 looks promising, e.g. 23...♝f6 24 ♝xf6+ ♙xf6 25

f4 exf4 26 ♖xf4 ♕d7 27 e5!, freeing the e4-square and creating a dangerous attack.

c) 17...♞b8 18 ♖d2 ♙c8 19 ♖h2 (the simple plan of 19 axb5 axb5 20 ♞a2 ♙g7 21 ♞eal also gives White an edge, Spassky-Karpov, Leningrad Ct (10) 1974) 19...♙e7 20 axb5 axb5 21 ♖h1 ♖xd5!? 22 ♙xe7 ♖xe7 23 ♖xd6 ♞b6 24 ♖d2 ♖c5 25 ♖e3 ♖c7 26 ♞ed1 and the weak dark squares on the kingside cause Black some concern, Popović-Gligorić, Yugoslavia 1980.

d) 17...♙e7 18 ♙e3 ♖c7 19 ♞a3 ♖c5 20 ♖e2 ♙f8 21 ♞eal once again gives White a typical small advantage, Ciocaltea-Spassky, Dortmund 1973.

18 ♙e3 ♖c5 19 ♖d2 (D)



19...h5

If Black defends with 19...♖h7, then the most promising plan is a direct kingside attack involving f4. For example, 20 ♖h2 ♙g7 21 ♞f1 and now:

a) 21...♖xa4 22 ♙xa4 bxa4 23 ♞xa4 a5 24 f4 h5 25 fxe5 dxe5 26 ♙g5 ♙a6 (Timman-Portisch, Reggio Emilia

1984/5) and now Simić's suggestion of 27 ♖f2 looks good for White.

b) 21...h5 (it looks rather illogical to play ...♖h7 and ...h5, since, with the g5-square available to White, the black king can be exposed) 22 ♖f3! ♖fd7 23 ♖g5+ ♖g8 24 f4 f6 25 f5! fxg5 26 fxg6 ♞f8 27 ♙xg5 ♖e8 28 ♖f5 and White's attack is very strong, Zagorovsky-Diaconescu, corr 1988.

20 ♙g5 ♙e7 21 ♞a3

White continues to combine play on both sides of the board. 21 ♙h6 used to be quite common, but it seems that after 21...♙f8! White's best move is to retain the bishops with 22 ♙g5!, as 22 ♙xf8 ♞xf8 23 ♖h6 ♖h7! appears to defend for Black.

21...♞b8

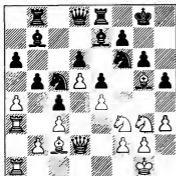
After 21...♖fd7, 22 ♙xe7 ♖xe7 23 ♞eal ♖g7 24 axb5 axb5 25 ♞xa8 ♞xa8 26 ♞xa8 ♙xa8 gave Black equality in Tatai-Dorfman, Texta 1988, but of course White should keep his bishop with 22 ♙e3!.

22 ♞eal (D)

22 ♖e3 ♖h7! allows the exchange of bishops, which eases Black's defence, but 22 axb5 is another promising option. After 22...axb5 23 ♙e3 ♙f8 24 ♖e2 ♙c8 25 ♖d2 ♙d7 26 ♞eal White's control of the a-file gives him a slight edge, Dimitrov-Gullaksen, Debrecen Echt 1992.

After 22 ♞eal White's chances to play on both sides of the board give him a modest but persistent advantage. Nevertheless, Black remains very solid, if a little passive, and many players are willing to defend this position. Here are some sample lines:

B



a) 22...h7 23. g3! (naturally, White keeps this bishop) 23...g6 24. e2 f8 25. c1 fd7 26. axb5 axb5 27. b4 cxb3 28. dxb3 c7 29. dxc5 dxc5 30. c2 c8 31. a7 d8 32. a5 puts Black under great pressure,

Topalov-Van der Sterren, Antwerp 1997.

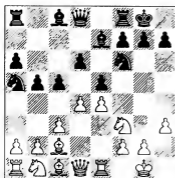
b) 22...h4!? 23. g4 fxe4 24. dxe4 dxe4 25. gxe4 g4 26. axb5 axb5 27. a5 c8 28. a7 f6 29. h4! e7 (29...g4 loses to 30. g6! fxg6 31. Wh6) 30. h5! was Adams-G.Georgadze, Groningen FIDE KO Wch 1997. Now the most resilient defence for Black is 30...xa7 31. xa7 b6 32. a1 f5, although after 33. c2 Black's weakened kingside still gives White some advantage.

c) 22...c8!? 23. axb5 axb5 24. a7 (24. e2 allows 24...d5!) 24...b7 25. a8 fd7 26. e3 c7 27. fl a7 28. xa7 xa7 29. g5 d8 30. h1 b6 and Black has equalized, Svidler-Piket, Wijk aan Zee 1999.

15 The Chigorin Defence

1 e4 e5 2 ♟f3 ♞c6 3 ♜b5 a6 4 ♜a4
 ♟f6 5 0-0 ♜e7 6 ♞e1 b5 7 ♜b3 d6 8
 c3 0-0 9 h3 ♟a5 10 ♜c2 c5 11 d4 (D)

B



c-file is opened with the pawn exchange ...cxd4.

The Theory of the Chigorin Defence

1 e4 e5 2 ♟f3 ♞c6 3 ♜b5 a6 4 ♜a4
 ♟f6 5 0-0 ♜e7 6 ♞e1 b5 7 ♜b3 d6 8
 c3 0-0 9 h3 ♟a5 10 ♜c2 c5 11 d4

Now we will consider Black's four main moves:

- A: 11... ♜b7 128
- B: 11... ♟d7 130
- C: 11... ♟c6 132
- D: 11... ♞c7 133

The Chigorin Defence (9... ♟a5) is the traditional way for Black to defend the Closed Lopez. Black gains time by attacking the Lopez bishop and uses this tempo to connect his queenside pawns with ...c5. Since the emergence of the Breyer and the Zaitsev Variations, the Chigorin has declined in popularity, but it remains a very well respected line and over the years it has built up a significant body of theory.

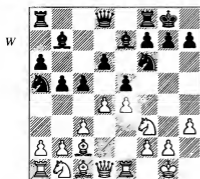
If the Chigorin set-up does have a weakness, then it's the offside positioning of the knight on a5. Often Black has to expend several tempi to get it back into play. On the plus side for Black, many lines offer counterattacking chances, especially when the

Firstly, here are a couple of less frequently played ideas:

a) 11... ♞e8!? 12 dxe5 dxc5 13 ♟xc5 ♜d6 (13... ♜b7 14 ♞f3 ♜d6 15 ♟g4 ♟xg4 16 ♞xg4 ♟c4 17 f4! was good for White in Smirin-Gofshtein, Israel 1991) 14 ♟xf7! ♟xf7 15 e5 ♞e7 16 ♜f4! ♜c7 (16... ♜b8 17 ♟d2! ♟d5 18 ♞h5+ ♟f8 19 ♜g5 gives White a very strong attack) 17 ♞e3 ♞d7 18 c6+ ♞xc6 19 ♞xd7+ ♜xd7 20 ♜xc7 and White has a healthy extra pawn, Sax-Hebden, London ECC 1993.

b) 11... cxd4 12 cxd4 ♜b7 13 d5!? (13 ♟bd2 transposes to Line A) 13... ♜c8 14 ♜d3 ♜d7 15 ♜c3 g6 16 b4 ♟b7 17 ♟c3! favoured White in Leko-L.B.Hansen, Copenhagen 1995.

A)
11...♙b7 (D)



A favourite of the Ukrainian grandmaster Oleg Romanishin.

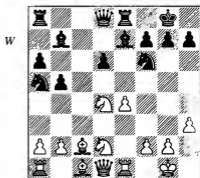
12 ♖bd2

Continuing with classical development. It should be pointed out that 12 dxe5 dxe5 13 ♖xe5?! ♗xd1 14 ♙xd1 ♖xc4 15 ♙f3 f5 leaves Black with no problems at all. However 12 d5, blocking the centre and the b7-bishop, is an important alternative. Play continues 12...♖c4 (improving the position of the knight) 13 b3 ♖b6 14 a4 (14 ♖bd2 g6 15 ♖f1 ♖h5 16 ♙h6 ♗e8 17 ♗d2 ♙f8 was equal in Vasiukov-Romanishin, Vršac 1989) 14...♙c8! (the bishop has no future on b7, where it's simply biting on granite) and now:

a) 15 ♖bd2 g6 16 ♙d3 ♙d7 17 a5 ♖c8 18 ♖f1 ♖h5 19 ♙h6 ♗e8 20 ♗d2 ♙f6 21 b4 c4 (the queenside is closed, leaving both sides to concentrate on the other wing) 22 ♙c2 ♖f4!? 23 ♗a3 g5 24 ♖h1 ♖h8 25 h4 g4 with a very unclear position, Wahls-Romanishin, Biel 1995.

b) 15 ♙c3 bxa4 16 bxa4 ♖c4 17 ♙c1 ♖a5! (an incredible piece of prophylaxis; the knight will be attacked on c4 in any case so it moves away now) 18 ♖bd2 (after 18 ♗d3, Black shouldn't play 18...c4?! 19 ♗c2 ♗c7 20 ♙a3!, when he has some problems down the a3-f8 diagonal, Anand-Romanishin, New York PCA Ct (2) 1994, but instead 18...♖h5 19 c4 ♗b8 20 ♙d2 g6 21 ♗c3 ♗b4!, with substantial counterplay for Black, Fogarasi-Romanishin, Balatonbereny 1995) 18...♗c7 19 c4 ♗b8 20 ♗a2 g6 21 ♙b2 ♖h5 22 ♙d3 ♙d8 23 ♙c3 f6 24 ♙f1 ♗g7 25 ♗c2 ♗f7 with a level position, Anand-Romanishin, New York PCA Ct (4) 1994.

12...cxd4 13 cxd4 exd4 14 ♖xd4 ♗e8 (D)



This is one of the main ideas of the Romanishin Variation. Black gives up the centre and sets about assaulting White's e4-pawn, which in many lines proves to be just as vulnerable as the more outwardly weak d6-pawn. Black can also contemplate a timely ...d5 in

order to liquidate the centre entirely, although he must be careful that this break cannot be answered by a favourable e5 advance.

15 b3

Preparing the queenside fianchetto and preventing any thoughts of ...d4. A slightly more active plan is 15 b4!? d4c6 (15...d4c4? 16 dxc4 bxc4 17 a4! f8 18 g5 c8 19 f5 is very strong for White) 16 dxc6 xc6 17 b2, when White has the a2-g8 diagonal available for his light-squared bishop. On the other hand, the c4-square is now a potential outpost for the black knight, and this fact should dictate Black's coming moves. Now:

a) 17...xf8?! (the plan of attacking the c4-pawn is not so effective here) 18 f3! c8 19 b3 e7 20 ad1 b7 21 f5 and the white bishops point menacingly at the black king, Xie Jun-Chiburdanidze, Manila wom Wch (3) 1991.

b) 17...d7! 18 d3 f6 19 xf6 xf6 20 d4 e5 21 dxc6 dxc6 22 d2 ac8 23 b3 d4 with an equal position, Popović-Romanishin, Novy Smokovec 1992.

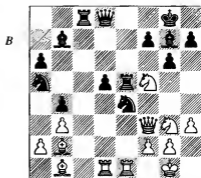
Another possibility for White is to continue the usual knight manoeuvre with 15 f1. This is actually another main line, but it allows Black to carry out his plan and practical results have been very reasonable for the second player. One sample variation is 15...f8 16 g3 g6 17 b3 d5!? 18 e5 e4 19 dxe4 dxe4 20 xe4 xe5 21 xb7 xe1+ 22 xe1 dxb7 with a completely level endgame.

15...f8 16 b2 g6 17 f3

The paradoxical 17 b4!? is also quite tempting. White loses a tempo, but Black has already committed himself to ...f8 and ...g6. Following 17...d4c6 18 dxc6 xc6 19 f3 g7 20 b3, Milos-Spangenberg, Buenos Aires 1998 witnessed the strategy working to perfection after 20...d5? 21 exd5 xe1+ 22 xe1 dxd5 23 xg7 xg7 24 c1! and White gained material. 20...e7! is significantly stronger for Black, continuing to pile up on the c4-pawn.

17...g7 18 ad1 c8 19 b1 e7

19...b4!? 20 f1 d5 is thought to be risky after 21 e5! d4 22 g3 xe5 23 df5! (D), but in fact things are not nearly so clear.



a) 23...d2? 24 f4 xe1+ 25 xe1 xb2 26 h6+ g7 27 h5+! wins for White, as 27...gxh5 leads to mate after 28 xf7+ xh6 29 xh7+ g5 30 g6+ f4 31 g3#.

b) 23...g5! 24 f4 and now:

b1) 24...e6? 25 h6+ xh6 26 xc5 was clearly better for White in

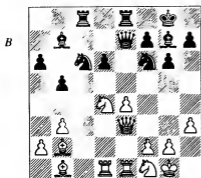
the game Velimirović-Romanishin, Vršac 1989.

b2) 24...♞xe1+! 25 ♞xe1 ♙xb2 26 ♖e7+ (26 ♗h6+ ♜g7 leads to nothing) 26...♜f8 27 ♞xg5 (or 27 ♗xc8 ♙c3!) 27...♗c6 28 ♗gf5 ♙g7 29 ♗xg7 ♜xg7, when 30 ♗f5+ ♜g8 31 ♗h6+ ♜g7 is a draw by repetition, while 30 ♙d3!? keeps the game going, although Black does have an extra pawn to counterbalance White's activity.

20 ♞e3

20 ♞c3 ♗c6 21 ♗xc6 ♙xc6 22 ♞d1 ♗h5 was also slightly better for White in Akopian-Motwani, Groningen 1990.

20...♗c6 21 ♗f1 (D)

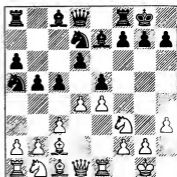


We are following Short-Thipsay, British Ch (Torquay) 1998. White kept a small advantage after 21...♗xd4 22 ♙xd4 ♞f8 23 f3 ♗d5 24 ♞f2 ♗c3 25 ♙xg7 ♜xg7 26 ♞d3 ♗xb1 27 ♞xb1 ♞c6 28 ♞bd1.

B)

11...♗d7 (D)

W



Paul Keres first came up with this move in the 1960s. Black defends his e5-pawn, but also prepares to exert pressure on the white centre, and in particular the d4-square. This can be augmented (usually after ...cxd4) by ...♗c6 and ...♙f6.

12 ♗bd2

12 dxc5!? is interesting, cutting across Black's basic plan. White will try to use the d5 outpost, which has become even more enticing since Black's knight has moved away from f6. Following 12...dxc5 13 ♗bd2 we have:

a) 13...♞c7? (this move falls in with White's plan) 14 ♗f1 ♗b6 15 ♗c3 ♞d8 16 ♞e2 ♙e6 17 ♗d5! ♗xd5 18 exd5 ♙xd5 19 ♗xe5 and Black faces a very nasty kingside attack. Fischer-Keres, Curaçao Ct 1962.

b) 13...♙b7 14 ♞c2 ♞c7 15 ♗f1 ♗c4 16 b3 ♗d6 17 c4! ♞fe8 18 ♙b2 ♙f8 19 ♞ad1 with an edge to White, Short-Portisch, Tilburg 1988.

c) 13...f6 14 ♗h4 ♗b6 15 ♗f5 ♞f7 16 ♞g4 ♜h8 and now Fischer recommends 17 h4, intending h5 and ♗f3-h4, with chances of a kingside attack.

12...cxd4

Recently the alternative capture 12...cxd4!? has been seen quite a bit. After 13 cxd4 dxc6 we have:

a) 14 d1 f1 cxd4 15 dxd4 dxd4 16 ♖xd4 dxe5 17 f4 dxc6 18 ♖d1 ♙f6 looks OK for Black, Yurtaev-Nenashev, USSR Ch 1991.

b) 14 d5 dxc5 15 dxe5 looks a better bet. After 15...dxe5?! 16 b3!, White can set about attacking the b5-pawn with a4, ♙d3 and ♖e2. More resilient is 15...dxe5 16 f4 d6g6 17 d3, when 17...f5 18 e5 looks critical.

13 cxd4 dxc6

This is stronger than 13...♙f6 14 d1 f1 dxc6 (or 14...dxc4?! 15 b3 dcb6 16 ♙b2 g6 17 dxc3 ♙g7 18 ♖d2 ♙b7 19 ♚ad1 and White is beautifully coordinated, Timman-Magomedov, Elista OL 1998) 15 ♙c3 exd4 16 dxd4 dde5 17 ♙b3 and White is better, Tal-Johannsson, Reykjavik 1964.

14 dxb3

This move is currently thought to be White's best chance for an advantage. 14 d5 dxb4 15 ♙b1 a5 16 a3 dxa6 17 b4 dxb6 18 ♖b3 ♙d7 gave Black equality in Suetin-Tal, USSR Ch 1964, while 14 d1 f1 exd4 transposes to note 'a' to Black's 12th move.

14...a5 15 ♙d3

15 ♙c3!? also promises an edge to White, e.g. 15...a4 16 dxb2 exd4 17 dxd4 dxd4 18 ♙xd4 dxe5 19 d1 f1 ♙c6 20 dxe3 dxc6 21 ♙c3 b4 22 ♙d2 a3 23 b3 ♙f6 24 ♚b1 ♙d4 25 d5 and Black's queenside pawns could actually become quite weak, Gligorić-Reshevsky, Tel-Aviv OL 1964.

15...♙a6

15...a4 is met by 16 ♙xb5! when 16...axb3 17 ♙xc6 ♚xa2 18 ♚b1 leaves the b3-pawn ready to be taken, while 16...♖b6 17 ♙xc6 ♖xc6 18 d1 d2 ♙f6 19 b3! exd4 20 ♙b2 dxe5 21 ♙xd4 ♙c6 22 ♚e3 afforded Black no compensation for the pawn in Tal-Romanishin, Jurmala 1987.

16 d5 dxb4 17 ♙f1 a4

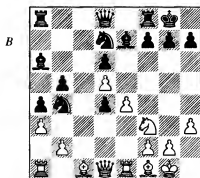
Delaying this move is asking for trouble. After 17...♚c8 White can play 18 dxa5! as 18...♖xa5 runs into 19 ♙d2, followed by 20 a3, winning the piece back while keeping an extra pawn.

18 d1 d4!?

This is a very clever move. Previously the main line ran 18 a3 dxd5 19 ♖xd5 and now:

a) 19...axb3 20 ♙xb5 d1 f6 21 ♖d3 ♙xb5 22 ♖xb5 ♖b8 23 ♖xb8 ♚axb8 24 ♙g5 with a slight edge to White, as the b3-pawn is quite weak, Sax-Am.Rodriguez, Subotica IZ 1987.

b) 19...dxb6 20 ♖d1 axb3 21 ♖xb3 ♖d7 was roughly level in Hellers-Timman, Amsterdam 1986.

18...exd4 19 a3 (D)

This is a crucial position in the evaluation of Keres's Variation. Let's look at some of Black's possibilities:

a) 19...♖c2? 20 ♖xc2 ♘f6 21 ♙f4 ♗c8 22 ♗d2 gave White a clear plus in Lau-Toshkov, Skien U-18 Wch 1979.

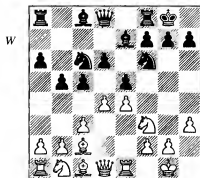
b) 19...♙f6 20 axb4 ♗b6 21 b3 axb3 22 ♗xb3 ♘e5 23 ♘xe5 dxe5 24 ♗a5 was also good for White in Shamkovich-Benjamin, USA 1976. The a6-bishop is a very poor piece.

c) 19...♗xd5 (a recent try) 20 exd5 ♙f6 21 ♗xd4 ♘c5 22 ♘c6 ♗b6 23 ♙f4 ♗fe8 24 ♗c2 ♘b3 25 ♗ad1! and White was on top in Anand-Piket, Wijk aan Zee 1999.

d) 19...♘c5!? is an untried suggestion from *NCO*. Now 20 ♗xd4 ♙f6 21 axb4 ♙xd4 22 bxc5 dxc5 looks quite unclear, but 20 axb4 ♘b3 21 ♗b1 ♙f6 22 ♙d3, preparing ♘d2, may still give White the edge.

C)

11...♗c6 (D)



Immediately putting pressure on d4, and inviting White to close the

centre with a gain of time. Once again, you'll find lots of Romanishin games in the notes. Nowadays this line has gone out of fashion but it still remains a sound option.

12 d5

If 12 ♘bd2 Black does best to release the tension in the centre with 12...cxd4 13 cxd4 exd4 After 14 ♘b3 ♘b4 15 ♙b1 d3! 16 ♘bd4 ♙b7 17 a3 ♘c2 18 ♘xc2 dxc2 19 ♙xc2 ♗e8, when Black was equal in Abramović-Romanishin, Stara Pazova 1988.

12...♗a5

Black's two other knight moves are not so good:

a) 12...♘b8 13 a4 ♙b7 14 ♘bd2 ♘bd7 15 ♘f1 and now if Black continues naturally with 15...♗e8 16 ♘g3 ♙f8 he is merely two tempi down on the Breyer Variation.

b) 12...♗a7 13 a4 ♘d7 (13...♙d7 14 ♘xe5! dxe5 15 d6 is good for White) 14 ♙e3 ♗c7 15 ♘bd2 ♘b6 16 a5 ♘d7 17 b4 led to a significant advantage for White in Nunn-Van der Wiel, Brussels 1988.

13 ♘bd2

13 b3!? is a serious alternative to the text. White prevents ...♗c4 and keeps the option of developing the c1-bishop before the b1-knight. Black can reply:

a) 13...g6 14 a4 ♙d7 (*ECO* suggests 14...♗e8 as an improvement, which is fine until you see 15 axb5 axb5 16 b4!) 15 axb5 axb5 16 ♘xc5 dxe5 17 d6 ♘h5 18 dxe7 ♗xe7 19 ♙c3 and the bishop-pair gave White an edge in Benjamin-Romanishin, Moscow 1987.

b) 13...♔d7 14 ♖xe5! dxe5 15 d6, again with a small plus.

c) 13...♖e8 14 a4 ♔d7 15 axb5 axb5 16 ♕e3 g6 17 ♖bd2 ♗g7 18 b4 cxb4 19 cxb4 ♖c4 20 ♖xc4 bxc4 21 ♗d2 f5 with an unclear position, Psakhis-Romanishin, Moscow 1986.

13...g6

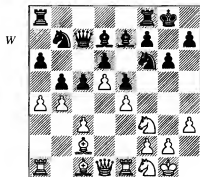
Preparing ...♖h5, which at the moment would fail to ♖xe5. Black's other plan here is 13...c4, preparing ...♖b7-c5. After 14 ♖f1 ♖b7 White has two ways to achieve the advantage:

a) 15 g4! ♖h6 16 ♗g3 ♖h7 17 ♖h2 ♕g5 18 ♖xg5 hxg5 19 ♕e3 ♞e8 20 ♗d2 f6 (Chandler-Romanishin, USSR vs Rest of the World, London 1984) and now I like the idea of 21 ♖g2, followed by f3, ♞h1 and h4.

b) 15 b3 ♗c7 16 ♕b2 cxb3 17 axb3 ♖c5 18 ♗d3d2 ♔d7 19 b4 ♖a4 20 ♕xa4 bxa4 21 c4 and White will push through with c5, Hulak-Romanishin, Yugoslavia-USSR 1976.

Note that 13...♗c7 transposes to Line D.

14 a4 ♔d7 15 b4 ♖b7 16 ♖f1 ♗c7 (D)



Black seems to be close to equality here, e.g.:

a) 17 ♕h6 ♞fc8 18 axb5 cxb4 19 bxa6 ♖c5 20 cxb4 ♖xa6 21 ♕a4 ♖xb4 22 ♕xd7 ♞xa1 23 ♗xa1 ♖xd7 was level in Geller-Romanishin, Moscow 1985.

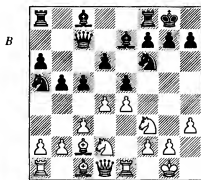
b) 17 a5 ♞ac8 18 ♔d3 ♖h5 19 ♕h6 ♞fe8 20 ♞c1 ♕f8 21 ♔d2 ♕g7 22 c4 ♖f4 was unclear in Psakhis-Romanishin, Sochi 1984.

D)

11...♗c7

Defending e5 with the queen is Black's most common choice.

12 ♖bd2 (D)



Now Black has many different ways to proceed:

D1: 12...♔d7 134

D2: 12...♞e8 134

D3: 12...♖c6 135

D4: 12...cxd4 136

Other moves often transpose, e.g.:

a) 12...♞d8 and now 13 ♖f1 cxd4 14 cxd4 gives us Line D41, while

White can also consider 13 b3!?, e.g. 13...♗d7!? (13...cxd4 14 cxd4 is also Line D41) 14 d5 (keeping the tension with 14 ♖f1 also looks good) 14...g6 15 ♖f1 c4 16 b4 ♖b7 (Brodsky-Piket, Wijk aan Zee 1995) and now the best chance to keep the advantage is probably 17 a4!?

b) 12...♗b7 13 d5 (13 ♖f1 cxd4 14 cxd4 gives us Line D4) 13...♗c8 and we have transposed to Line D3.

D1)

12...♗d7

This is a rather passive system where Black just contents himself with the completing the mobilization of his forces and consolidating his kingside. This is achieved but only at the cost of reducing his chances of counterplay.

13 ♖f1 ♖fe8

13...cxd4 14 cxd4 would give us Line D43.

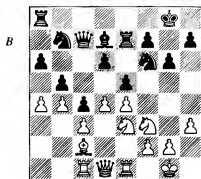
Black can also improve his knight's position by 13...♗c4. Then Topalov-Frolov, Biel IZ 1993 continued 14 ♖e2 ♖fe8 15 b3 ♖b6 16 dxe5 dxe5 17 c4 ♖h5 (17...bxc4 18 bxc4 ♖a4 19 ♗xa4 ♗xa4 20 ♗c3 followed by ♗d5 is good for White) 18 ♗d2 ♖ab8 19 a4 bxc4 20 bxc4 and now according to Frolov Black should play 20...♗c8 21 ♗c3 ♖f4 22 ♖f1 ♗e6, although after 23 ♗d5 White still retains a slight edge.

14 b3 g6 15 ♗g5! ♖h5 16 ♗xe7 ♖xe7 17 ♗e3 ♖f6

If 17...♖f4?, White can chase the knight immediately with 18 g3, as 18...♖xh3+ 19 ♖g2 ♖ec8 20 dxe5 dxe5 21 ♖h1 gives White a very large

advantage. After the captures on h3 the rook will be no match for the two minor pieces, especially as White has the inviting d5 outpost.

18 ♖c1!? ♖b7 19 b4 c4 20 a4 (D)



White has the advantage in every sector of the board, holding the key pawn-breaks in both the centre and the queenside, and having chances to exploit the weak dark squares on the kingside. Stein-Matanović, Tel-Aviv OL 1964 continued 20...♖ae8 21 axb5 axb5 22 ♖a1 ♗c6 23 ♖a6 ♖c8 24 d5 ♗d7 25 ♖h2 ♖g7 26 ♖f3 ♖f8 27 ♖ca1 and White was in total control.

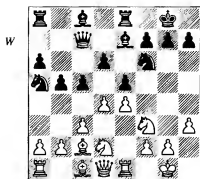
D2)

12...♖e8 (D)

This is similar to the last line, except Black doesn't commit the c8-bishop so soon.

13 ♖f1

This is the most obvious response, but there's something to be said about the ambitious 13 b4!?, which was introduced by Mikhail Tal. Play can continue 13...cxb4 14 cxb4 ♗c6 (14...♗c4



15 dxc4 bxc4 16 a4 is good for White as the c4-pawn could become exposed after c1) 15 b2 (15 a3 is also not bad, but this pawn sacrifice looks quite promising) 15... dxb4 (Black can refrain from taking the pawn, but 15... exd4 16 dxd4 dxd4 17 exd4 b7 18 c1 is a bit better for White) 16 b3 d3 (16... d7 17 c1 b6 18 a3! d3 19 exf7+ xf7 20 b3+ f8 21 xd3 is better for White) 17 exf7+ xf7 (not 17... xf8? 18 xe8 xb2 19 b1 a4 20 c1 with a winning position, Tal-Gurgenidze, USSR Ch 1961) 18 b3+ d5 19 xd3 f4 20 b3+ e6 21 d5 d7 22 xe5! with a clear advantage for White, Jansa-Kostro, Vrnjačka Banja Z 1967.

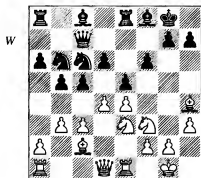
13... f8

Pressurizing the e4-pawn like this is more accurate than 13... g6 , which allows White to achieve a significant advantage after 14 e3 f8 15 b4! cxb4 16 cxb4 c6 17 b2 b7 (or 17... dxb4 18 b3 with excellent play for the pawn) 18 c1 b6 19 b3 , Tukmakov-Smyslov, USSR Ch 1973.

14 g5 d7 15 e3

15 b3 d6 16 c1 c6 17 b1 e7 18 g3 a5 gave Black enough counterplay in R.Byrne-Ivkov, Skopje OL 1972.

15... d6 16 b3 f6 17 h4 c6 (D)



Yanofsky-Kraidman, Tel-Aviv 1966 now continued 18 dxc5 dxc5 19 d5 d8 20 a4 with a small plus to White.

D3)

12... c6

This line is similar to, but more popular than 11... c6 (Line C). Again Black puts pressure on d4 and asks White to make a decision about the centre.

13 d5

Blocking the centre with the text-move has become the main choice, rather than White's other plan starting with 13 dxc5 , which was popularized by Fischer during the 1960s. After 13... dxc5 14 d1 White has a straightforward plan of trying to occupy the d5-outpost. This idea claimed quite a few victims until a successful antidote was found. After 14... e6 15 e3

♖ad8 16 ♖e2 c4! 17 ♜f5 (17 ♜g5 can be met by 17...h6! 18 ♜xe6 fxe6, when the doubled e-pawns protect many squares, in particular d5, while White has to be wary of the pseudo-sacrifice ...♜d4) 17...♞fe8 18 ♙g5 ♜d7 19 ♙xe7 ♜xc7 20 ♜g5 ♜f8 21 ♜xe6 ♜xe6 22 g3 ♖c6 Black is extremely solid, Rubineti-Filip, Palma de Mallorca IZ 1970.

13...♜d8

This is the most popular knight move here. Black hopes to reactivate this knight via the f7-square. The other choices include:

a) 13...♜a7 (this looks too cumbersome) 14 ♜f1 ♙d7 15 g4 ♜c8 16 ♜g3 g6 17 ♖h2 ♜e8 18 ♙h6 ♜g7 19 ♞g1 and White has already built up a menacing kingside initiative, Klovans-L.Schneider, Jurmala 1978.

b) 13...♜a5 14 b3! (preventing ...♜c4 before playing ♜f1) 14...♙d7 15 ♜f1 ♜b7 16 ♜g3 (16 c4 bxc4 17 bxc4 ♞fb8 18 ♙d2 ♖c8 19 a4 is also better for White, Balashov-Kholmov, USSR Ch 1969) 16...c4 17 b4! (again restraining Black's problem knight) 17...♞fc8 18 ♜f5 ♙f8 19 ♜h2 with a clear advantage for White, Geller-Mecking, Palma de Mallorca IZ 1970.

14 a4

White's future lies in a kingside attack, but it's worth flicking this move in, as the a-file could also prove to be a useful asset.

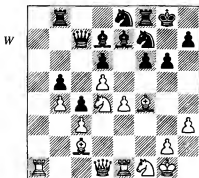
14...♞b8 15 axb5 axb5 16 b4 c4

Or 16...♜b7 17 ♜f1 ♙d7 18 ♙e3 ♞a8 19 ♖d2 ♞fc8 20 ♙d3 g6 21 ♜g3 ♙f8 22 ♞a2 and White was better in Karpov-Unzicker, Nice OL 1974.

17 ♜f1 ♜e8 18 ♜3h2 f6 19 f4 exf4

Black must get a bit of air for his pieces. 19...♜f7 20 ♜f3 g6 21 f5! ♜g7 22 g4 gave Black no breathing space in Karpov-Spassky, USSR Ch 1973.

20 ♙xf4 ♜f7 21 ♜f3 g6 22 ♜d4 ♙d7 (D)



Black's position remains very solid, but White's space advantage guarantees a slight plus. Ernst-Brandl, Hartberg 1991 continued 23 ♜e3 ♜g7 24 ♞a5 ♖b7 25 ♜c6!? ♙xc6 26 dxc6 ♖xc6 27 ♖d5 ♖xd5 28 ♜xd5 and White had excellent play for the pawn.

D4)

12...cxd4

Black's most popular and active line. Black immediately seeks counterplay down the open c-file.

13 cxd4 (D)

Now:

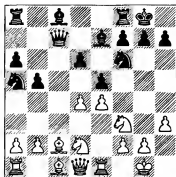
D41: 13...♞d8 137

D42: 13...♙b7 137

D43: 13...♙d7 139

D44: 13...♜c6 140

B



D41)

13...♞d8

A sneaky move, which is part of a plan to surprise White with ...d5.

14 b3

After 14 ♖f1 Black puts his plan into operation with 14...exd4. Now 15 ♖xd4 d5 looks fine for Black, while 15 ♔f4!? leads to the following lines:

a) 15...♗c4 16 b3 ♖a3 17 ♔d3 ♜b6 18 ♗g3 b4 19 ♜d2 d5 20 ♞ac1! and White was better in Korneev-Fernandez Garcia, Saragossa 1996.

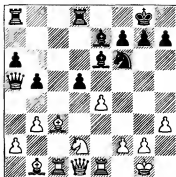
b) 15...♗c6!? 16 ♔b3 ♜b6 (the alternative 16...♔e6 also looks OK) 17 ♞c1 ♔d7 18 ♗g3 ♞ac8 19 ♞e2 and now White was slightly better after 19...d3 20 ♜xd3 ♗e5 21 ♗xe5 dxe5 22 ♞xc8 ♔xc8 23 ♔e3 ♞xd3 24 ♔xb6 ♞d7 25 ♗f5 in Popović-Zsu.Polgar, Novi Sad tt 1990, but 19...h6!, planning to meet 20 ♞d2 with 20...g5, looks stronger.

14...♗c6 15 ♔b2 exd4 16 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 17 ♔xd4 ♔e6

White maintains a small plus after 17...♔b7 18 ♞c1 ♜a5 19 ♔b1 ♞ac8 20 ♞xc8 ♔xc8 21 ♗f1.

18 ♞c1 ♜a5 19 ♔b1 d5 20 ♔c3 (D)

B



Black has achieved the desired ...d5 break, but there is still plenty to play for, e.g.:

a) 20...b4 21 ♔xf6 ♔xf6 22 e5 ♔g5 23 ♜e2 ♜b6 24 ♞cd1 gave White a small edge in Popović-Hellers, Thessaloniki OL 1988.

b) 20...♜a3 21 e5 d4 and now, instead of 22 ♔a1 ♗d5, which was unclear in the game Ernst-Wedberg, Lugano 1989, 22 exf6 deserves attention. After 22...dxc3 23 ♜c2! (not 23 fxe7? cxd2) 23...g6 (or 23...♔xf6 24 ♜xh7+ ♗f8 25 ♗e4) 24 ♗c4! bxc4 25 fxe7 ♜xe7 26 bxc4 ♜g5 27 ♜xc3 White is a pawn to the good.

D42)

13...♔b7 14 d5

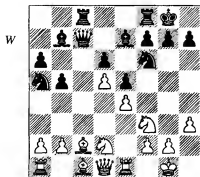
Nowadays this move, which gains space and blunts the b7-bishop, is more popular than the older 14 ♖f1. One sample line after 14 ♖f1 is 14...♞ac8 15 ♞e2 d5!? 16 ♗xe5 dxe4 17 ♗g3 (or 17 ♔g5 ♞fd8 18 ♗g3 h6

19 ♖h4 ♘c6 20 ♘xc6 ♙xc6 21 ♚f5 ♗d7 22 ♘e7+ ♜xe7 23 ♗d2 ♞d7 and Black was equal in Murey-Pinter, French Cht 1994) 17... ♞fd8 18 ♚f5 ♙d6 19 ♘d6 ♗xd6 20 ♙e3 h6 21 ♗d2 ♘c6 22 ♘xc6 ♙xc6 and White's bishop-pair is compensated by pressure on the d4-pawn, Stefansson-Pinter, Lyons ECC 1994.

14... ♞ac8 (D)

Black logically puts his rook on the open c-file and attacks the c2-bishop. The only problem with this plan is that the b7-bishop may wind up being blocked out of the game for a long time. To deal with this, Black will try to arrange a timely ...f5 to blow open the centre and weaken the d5-pawn. Of course, this is much more easily said than done.

Another possibility is the immediate re-routing of the bishop with 14... ♙c8. White can then continue in the classical manner with 15 ♚f1, but 15 b4!? also looks good. After 15... ♘c4 16 ♘xc4 both 16... bxc4 17 ♞e3! ♙d7 18 a4 and 16... ♗xc4 17 ♞b1 ♙d7 18 ♙d3 ♗c7 19 ♙e3 favour White.



15 ♙b1!?

This move is prophylaxis against Black's ...f5 break. On b1 the bishop is less prone to an attack from ...♘d7-c5 or ...♘h5-f4. Nevertheless, the more active 15 ♙d3! is a fully playable alternative, e.g. 15... ♘d7 16 ♚f1 f5 17 ♚g3! (17 exf5 ♙xd5 18 ♚g5 ♙xg5 19 ♙xg5 ♙a8 20 ♗g4 ♚f6 21 ♗g3 may also be a bit better for White, although Black does have central pawns in compensation for the bishop-pair) 17... f4 18 ♚f5 and now:

a) 18... ♙d8 19 b3 g6 20 ♘h6+ ♚g7 21 ♚g4 h5 22 ♚gh2 is clearly better for White according to Leko. This position is a bit deceptive, as Black has managed to gain quite a bit of space on the kingside. However, with his bishop totally redundant on b7, Black will find it very difficult to arrange the desired ...g5-g4 push, while White's queenside attack should run reasonably smoothly.

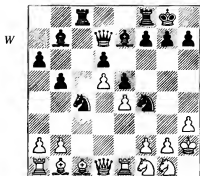
b) 18... ♞xf5! 19 exf5 ♘c5 20 b3 ♙f6! 21 ♞b1 and Black doesn't have quite enough for the exchange, Leko-Gomez Esteban, Pamplona 1993/4.

15... ♘h5

Arranging a quick ...f5 is not so effective when the bishop is on b1. After 15... ♘d7 16 ♚f1 f5?! 17 exf5! ♚f6 18 ♚g5 ♙xd5 19 ♘c3 ♗b7 20 b3 ♞fe8 21 ♙d2 ♙d8 22 ♙b4 White was clearly on top in Shirov-Adla, Bordeaux rpd 1998.

16 ♚f1 ♚f4 17 ♚h2! ♗d7 18 ♚g1 ♘c4 (D)

The diagram looks rather amusing, with the black pieces seeming rather active, while the white ones are huddled



on the back rank. However, if you were able to shuffle your pieces at the start of the game, I imagine White's set-up would be a very popular one. In fact, this is as good as it gets for Black, as the next couple of moves see his knights driven back into defence. After 19 g3 ♖g6 20 b3 ♜b6 21 ♜e3 ♙d8 22 ♜e2 ♜e7 23 g4 ♖g6 24 ♜f5 White held the advantage in Van Riemsdijk-Matsuura, Curitiba 1992.

D43)

13...♙d7

Once again, Black prepares to put a rook on c8. Compared to 13...♙b7 (Line D42), Black puts less immediate pressure on the centre, but on the other hand, if White advances d5, it doesn't leave the black bishop hitting a brick wall. Because of this, it makes more sense for White to keep the central tension.

14 ♜f1 ♜ac8

14...♜fc8 is an interesting attempt by Black to improve on the main line. Then:

a) 15 ♜e3 ♜c6 and now:

a1) 16 d5 ♜b4 17 ♙b1 a5 18 a3 ♜a6 shows the main point of Black's idea; his rook is well placed on a8. For example 19 b4? would now simply lose a pawn.

a2) 16 a3 and now Fischer-Bisguier, US Ch (New York) 1958/9 continued 16...a5 17 d5 ♜d8 18 ♙d2 a4 19 ♙b4 ♙f8 20 ♙d3 with an advantage to White. However, 16...♜xd4 17 ♜xd4 exd4 18 ♜xd4 d5! must be critical, reaching a position very similar to the note to White's 16th move, the only difference being the placing of the black rooks. This little difference helps White, but Black's position is still fully playable, e.g.:

a21) 19 b4 dxe4 20 ♙xe4 ♜xe4 21 ♜d5 ♙f6 22 ♜xe4 ♜d8 looks pretty equal.

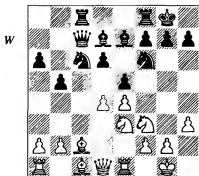
a22) 19 e5 ♙c5 20 ♜f4 ♜e8 21 ♜f5 ♜h5 22 ♜f3 ♙xf5! (22...♜xe5 23 ♜xe5 ♜xe5 24 ♜xh5 ♜e1+ 25 ♜h2 ♙xf2 26 ♙e3! ♜xa1 27 ♙xf2 ♜xb2 28 ♙d4 ♜xc2 29 ♜g5 wins for White) 23 ♙xf5 g6 24 ♙g4 ♜xe5 25 ♙d2, when White has some compensation for the pawn, but is it enough?

b) Given all of this, the most accurate move for White may well be 15 ♜e2!?, leading to play similar to the next note.

15 ♜e3

This is the main move here, but 15 ♜e2!? is also appealing, for example 15...♜fe8 16 b3 ♜c6 17 ♙b2 ♙f8 18 ♜c1 ♜b7 19 ♙b1 g6 20 dxe5 dxe5 21 ♜e3 ♙g7 22 ♙d2 ♙e6 23 ♜d5 with an edge to White, Chandler-Thipsay, London Lloyds Bank 1989.

15...♜c6 (D)



16 d5

An instructive mistake is 16 a3?! Qxd4 17 Qxd4 exd4 18 Wxd4 d5! 19 e5 (19 exd5 Qc5! 20 Wc3 Qxe3 21 Qxe3 Wxc3 22 Qxc3 Qxc3 23 bxc3 Qxd5 favours Black) 19... Qc5 20 Wf4 Qfe8 21 Qf5 Qh5 22 Wf3 Qxf2+! 23 Wxf2 Wxc2 24 Wxc2 Qxc2 25 Qe3 Qc6 26 Qxd5 Qc5 and White is struggling to draw, Hartman-L.B.Hansen, Copenhagen 1996.

16... Qb4 17 Qb1 a5 18 a3 Qa6 19 b4!

This is an important move. White uses a little trick to gain valuable space on the queenside and fix the black pawn on b5, where it can be attacked.

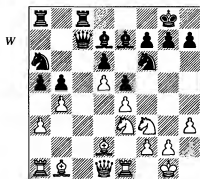
19...Qa8

Black has other possibilities in this position:

a) 19... axb4 20 axb4 Wb7 (certainly not 20... Qxb4? 21 Qd2! trapping the knight – this is the trick) 21 Qd2 Qd8 22 Qd3 Qb6 23 We2 Qc7 24 Qd1 Qa8 25 Qc3 Qxa1 26 Qxa1 Qa8 27 Qc1 and the pressure on the b5-pawn assures White the advantage, Hellers-Howell, Reykjavik 1990.

b) 19... g6 20 Qd2 Qh5 (20... axb4 21 axb4 Wb7 22 Qd3 Qc7 23 Qc2 was slightly better for White in Tal-Hjartarson, Reykjavik 1987) 21 Qd3 Qf4 22 Qf1 f5 23 exf5 gxf5 24 Qc1 Wb7 25 Qxc8 Wxc8 26 bxa5 Qc5 27 Qb4 e4 28 Qd4! and Black has many weaknesses, Leko-Lukacs, Budapest 1993.

20 Qd2 Qfc8 (D)



White has a slight plus, although, as always, Black's position is very difficult to break down. Here are two possible continuations:

a) 21 g4!? g6 22 Qd3 Wb7 23 Qg2 Qd8 24 Qg1 , planning to continue with Qc2 and f4 , de Firmian-Piket, Amsterdam 1996.

b) 21 Qd3 axb4 22 axb4 Wb7 23 Qh2 Qc7 (Anand-Piket, Amsterdam 1993) and now Anand recommends 24 Qc2 , preventing ... Qh5 and preparing to recapture on a1 with the knight, followed by Qb3-a5 .

D44)

13...Qc6

Immediately asking White questions in the centre. On this particular occasion, White is served best by over-protecting the d4-pawn.

14 ♖b3 a5

Black begins the logical plan of attacking the b3-knight and gaining space on the queenside.

15 ♙e3 a4

15...♖b4 16 ♙b1 a4 17 ♖bd2 leads to the same position.

16 ♖bd2 ♙d7

Black also has two alternatives:

a) 16...♙e6 17 a3 ♖a5 18 ♙d3 ♗b8 19 ♗e2 b4 20 axb4 ♗xb4 21 ♗eb1 exd4 22 ♙xd4 ♖b3 23 ♖xb3 ♙xb3 24 ♙c3 ♗b7 25 ♖d4 ♗fc8 26 ♖f5 with a dangerous kingside attack, R.Byrne-F.Olafsson, Reykjavik 1984.

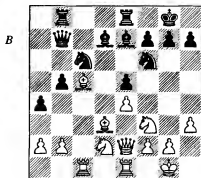
b) 16...♖b4!? 17 ♙b1 ♙d7 18 a3 ♖c6 19 ♙d3 ♖a5 20 ♗e2 (20 ♗c1!? ♗b8 21 ♗e2 ♗e8 22 ♗c2 ♙d8 23 dxe5 dxe5 24 ♙c5 gave White a slight edge in the game Tal-G.Kuzmin, Leningrad 1977) 20...♗b8 21 ♗ec1!? ♗e8 22 ♗ab1 ♙f8 (22...h6 23 b4 axb3 24 ♖xb3 ♖xb3 25 ♗xb3 leaves the b5-pawn very weak). The position after 22...♙f8 arose in Klovans-Beliavsky, Groningen 1992. Now instead of 23 b4?!, which allowed Black to equalize with 23...axb3 24 ♖xb3 ♖xb3

25 ♗xb3 exd4! 26 ♙xd4 ♗d8, Beliavsky suggests 23 ♙g5! and only then 24 b4.

17 ♗c1 ♗b7 18 ♗e2 ♗fe8 19 ♙d3 ♗ab8 20 dxe5

20 a3 exd4 21 ♖xd4 ♖e5 22 ♙b1 ♙d8 23 ♖f3 and now 23...♙a5 24 ♖xe5 dxe5 25 ♗ed1 ♙c6 26 b4 ♙d8 27 ♙c5 was good for White in Rötšagov-Gausel, Gothenburg 1998, but Black should keep the pressure on e4 with 23...♖g6!.

20...dxe5 21 ♙c5 (D)



This is Ljubojević-Timman, Bugojno 1982. After 21...♖h5 22 g3! ♙xc5 (22...♙xh3 23 ♙xe7 ♖xe7 24 ♖g5!) 23 ♗xc5 ♗b6 24 ♗ec1 White kept a small advantage.

Index of Variations

1 e4 e5 2 d3 c6 3 b5

Chapter 1: Without 3...a6, 3...d6, 3...c5 or 3...f5

Chapter 2: 3...f5 4 c3!

Chapter 3: 3...c5 4 0-0

Chapter 4: 3...d6 4 0-0

3...a6 4 a4

Chapter 5: Without 4...d6

Chapter 6: 4...d6 5 0-0

Chapter 7: 4...d6 5 0-0 dxe4 6 d4

Chapter 8: 4...d6 5 0-0 e7 6 e1 (6...b5 7 b3 0-0 8 a4)

Chapter 10: 4...d6 5 0-0 e7 6 e1 b5 7 b3 d6 8 c3 (8...0-0 9 h3)

4...d6 5 0-0 e7 6 e1 b5 7 b3 d6 8 c3 0-0 9 h3

Chapter 11: 9...d7 10 d4

Chapter 12: 9...b7 10 d4

Chapter 13: 9...h6 10 d4 e8 11 bd2 f8 12 f1

Chapter 14: 9...b8 10 d4

Chapter 15: 9...a5 10 c2 c5 11 d4

1: Rare Third Moves for Black

1 e4 e5 2 d3 c6 3 b5 9

A: 3...b4 9

B: 3...d6 10

C: 3...d4 12 4 dxd4 exd4 5 0-0 12

C1: 5...c6 12

C2: 5...c5 13

D: 3...g6 14 4 d4!? exd4 5 g5 e7 6 xe7 14

D1: 6...xe7 14

D2: 6...gxe7 15

E: 3...ge7 16

E1: 4 c3!? 16

E2: 4 c3 16

2: The Schliemann Variation

1 e4 e5 2 d3 c6 3 b5 f5 4 c3!
18

A: 4...d6 19

B: 4...d4 19

C: 4...fxe4 21 5 dxe4 21

C1: 5...d6 21

C2: 5...d5 22 6 dxe5! dxe4 7 dxc6 23

C21: 7...bxc6 23

C22: 7...d5 24

C23: 7...g5 25 8 e2 d6 9 f4 25

C231: 9...h4+ 25

C232: 9...xf4 26

3: The Classical Variation

1 e4 e5 2 d3 c6 3 b5 c5 4 0-0
29

A: 4...d7 30

B: 4...d4 30

C: 4...f6 31 5 c3 31

C1: 5...xe4!? 32

C2: 5...0-0 32

4: The Berlin Defence

1 e4 e5 2 d3 c6 3 b5 d6 4 0-0
37 4...xe4 5 d4! 37

A: 5...e7 38

B: 5...d6 40 6 xc6 dxc6 7 dxe5 40

B1: 7...e4!? 41

B2: 7...f5 42 8 xd8+ xd8 9 dxc3
42

B21: 9...e7 42

B22: 9...e6 43

B23: 9...h6 44

B24: 9...e8 44

B241: 10 b3 44

B242: 10 h3 45

5: The Deferred Steinitz and Other 4th Move Alternatives

1 e4 e5 2 d3 c6 3 b5 a6 4 a4
48

A: 4...f5 49

B: 4...b5 49

C: 4...d6 50 5 c3 50

C1: 5...f5 51

C2: 5...d7 52 6 d4 52

C21: 6...d7 52

C22: 6...g6 53

6: Møller and Arkhangelsk Variations

1 e4 e5 2 d3 c6 3 b5 a6 4 a4
d6 5 0-0 56

A: 5...d6 56

B: 5...c5 57 6 c3 b5 7 c2!? 58

B1: 7...d5!? 58

B2: 7...d6 59

C: 5...b5 59 6 b3 59

C1: 6...c5 60 7 c3 d6 8 a4 61

C11: 8...b7 62

C12: 8...b8 62

C13: 8...g4 63

C2: 6...b7 64 7 e1 c5 8 c3 65

C21: 8...0-0 65

C22: 8...d6 66 9 d4 b6 10 e3 0-0

11 b2 h6 12 h3 66

C221: 12...c8 67

C222: 12...exd4 67

C223: 12...b8 68

7: The Open Lopez

1 e4 e5 2 d3 c6 3 b5 a6 4 a4
d6 5 0-0 xe4 6 d4 71 6...b5 7 b3
d5 8 dxe5 e6 9 bd2 71

A: 9...c5 72

B: 9...e7 73 10 c3 c5 11 c2 g4
12 e1 73

B1: 12...0-0 74

B2: 12...d7 75

C: 9...c5 75 10 c3 d4 75

C1: 11 g5!? 76

C11: 11...dxc3 77

C12: 11...d5!? 78

C13: 11...xg5 78

C2: 11 xe6 79

8: The 8 a4 Anti-Marshall

1 e4 e5 2 d3 c6 3 b5 a6 4 a4
d6 5 0-0 e7 6 e1 83 6...b5 7 b3
0-0 8 a4 83

A: 8...b8 83

B: 8...b4 84

C: 8...b7 85 9 d3 85

C1: 9...e8 86

C2: 9...d6 86 10 b2 86

C21: 10...♖d7 87

C22: 10...♗a5 88

10: Rare Closed Lopez

Variations

1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♗c6 3 ♘b5 a6 4 ♗a4
 ♗f6 5 0-0 ♙e7 6 ♚e1 b5 7 ♘b3 d6 8
 c3 ♗6 8...0-0 9 h3 ♗6

A: 9...a5 96

B: 9...♙e6 97

11: The Karpov Variation

1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♗c6 3 ♘b5 a6 4 ♗a4
 ♗f6 5 0-0 ♙e7 6 ♚e1 b5 7 ♘b3 d6 8
 c3 0-0 9 h3 ♗d7 10 d4 99

A: 10...♗b6 99 11 ♗bd2 99

A1: 11...exd4 100

A2: 11...♙f6 101

B: 10...♙f6 101 11 a4! 101

B1: 11...♚b8 102

B2: 11...♗a5 102

B3: 11...♘b7 103

B31: 12 d5 103

B32: 12 ♗a3 104

12: The Zaitsev Variation

1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♗c6 3 ♘b5 a6 4 ♗a4
 ♗f6 5 0-0 ♙e7 6 ♚e1 b5 7 ♘b3 d6 8
 c3 0-0 9 h3 ♘b7 10 d4 108 10...♚e8
 11 ♗bd2 ♙f8 109

A: 12 d5 109

A1: 12...♗e7 109

A2: 12...♗b8 110 13 ♗f1 ♗bd7 110

A21: 14 ♗3h2 110

A22: 14 ♗g3 111

A221: 14...♗c5 111

A222: 14...g6 112

B: 12 a4 113 12...h6 13 ♙c2 exd4 14
 cxd4 ♗b4 15 ♙b1 c5! 16 d5 ♗d7 17
 ♚a3 114

B1: 17...c4 114 18 axb5 axb5 19 ♗d4
 114

B11: 19...♚xa3 115

B12: 19...♗e5 116

B2: 17...f5 116 18 ♗h2!? ♗f6 117 19
 ♚f3 ♚e5 20 ♚xf5 118

13: The Smyslov Variation

1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♗c6 3 ♘b5 a6 4 ♗a4
 ♗f6 5 0-0 ♙e7 6 ♚e1 b5 7 ♘b3 d6 8
 c3 0-0 9 h3 h6 10 d4 ♚e8 11 ♗bd2
 ♙f8 12 ♗f1 119

A: 12...♙d7 119

B: 12...♙b7 120

14: The Breyer Variation

1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♗c6 3 ♘b5 a6 4 ♗a4
 ♗f6 5 0-0 ♙e7 6 ♚e1 b5 7 ♘b3 d6 8
 c3 0-0 9 h3 ♗b8 10 d4 122 10...♗bd7
 11 ♗bd2 ♘b7 12 ♙c2 123 12...♚e8
 13 ♗f1 ♙f8 14 ♗g3 g6 15 a4 c5 16 d5
 124 16...c4 17 ♙g5 h6 18 ♙e3 ♗c5
 19 ♗d2 125

15: The Chigorin Defence

1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♗c6 3 ♘b5 a6 4 ♗a4
 ♗f6 5 0-0 ♙e7 6 ♚e1 b5 7 ♘b3 d6 8
 c3 0-0 9 h3 ♗a5 10 ♙c2 c5 11 d4 127

A: 11...♘b7 128

B: 11...♗d7 130

C: 11...♗c6 132

D: 11...♗c7 133 12 ♗bd2 133

D1: 12...♙d7 134

D2: 12...♚e8 134

D3: 12...♗c6 135

D4: 12...cxd4 136 13 cxd4 136

D41: 13...♚d8 137

D42: 13...♘b7 137

D43: 13...♙d7 139

D44: 13...♗c6 140